DARSHAN SINGH 'CANADIAN'

Terrorism in Punjab

SELECTED ARTICLES AND SPEECHES

Edited by

SATYAPAL DANG

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PATRIOT PUBLISHER
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Preface

Though a large number of books have been written on the Punjab problem, the motive behind the present volume is to delineate the grim situation obtaining today in this border state as experienced and witnessed by Darshan Singh 'Canadian' and portrayed by him in his writings and speeches.

In Punjab over the last four to five years a large number of secular-minded leaders of various parties have become victims of separatist-terrorists. The cold-blooded murder of Darshan Singh 'Canadian', who had become a legendary figure in his life time, however, marked the beginning of a new phase of terrorism because he was killed when he was in the thick of his political campaign against the cult of terrorism and secessionism in the storm centres of these anti-national elements. This book highlights how this campaign was being conducted, how sharp was its thrust and how challenging in keeping was it with the traditions and teachings of the Sikh Gurus. Anyone who reads Darshan Singh's speeches and articles would get an insight into his sense of realism and his understanding of the consciousness of the Sikh masses. His political campaigns were telling and so intense that the terrorists decided to liquidate him without losing time. And there was a design behind it—the terrorists wanted to terrorise all those who raised any voice against their politics, their ideology, their tactics. Darshan Singh 'Canadian' became a martyr because he was keeping aloft the banner of India's unity, integrity and secularism.

This book, therefore, is not only a humble tribute to him but is also intended to rouse all patriotic forces to mount a massive politico-ideological struggle against the forces of violence and separatism.

I am grateful to all those who have contributed articles for the second part of this book and am deeply indebted to Shri Prem Singh of Delhi, and Prof. Pritam Singh Parwana of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, for translating Darshan Singh Canadian's speeches, articles and some poems from Punjabi to English. I also express my gratitude to Dr. Avtar Singh, Khalsa College, Amritsar, for translating from Punjabi to English a poem by a well known Punjabi poet, Santokh Singh Dheer. My thanks are also due to Patriot Publishers and its editorial and production staff for their active cooperation, without which it would not have been possible to bring out this book in such a short time.

I am sure that the book will stimulate discussions on the problems of terrorism and will generate enthusiasm among the secular forces in the country to politically fight the demon of communalism and religious fundamentalism with determination.

Ekta Bhavan,
Chhehrata, Amritsar.
January 20, 1987.

SATYAPAL DANG

Introduction

Comrade Darshan Singh Canadian's assassination at the hands of the "Khalistani" terrorists on September 25, 1986 sent a shock-wave through the country. The national press splashed write-ups on the creditable role which he and other communists of Punjab had been playing against separatists extremists which marked them, particularly the CPI, as special targets of the terrorists.

Comrade Canadian was not the first communist to lose his life for the unity and integrity of our country in the course of the struggle against imperialist-backed separatist forces in Punjab. As many as fifteen CPI cadres, including some close sympathisers, had already fallen victim to the terrorist bullets. Two Naxalites had also been shot by them. The CPI (M) too lost one member, Dr. Avtar Singh of Tarn Taran sub-division of Amritsar district. On the day following Darshan Singh's assassination, Baldev Singh Mann, a leader of the CPI (M-L), belonging to the Chandrapulla Reddy group in Amritsar district was killed.

Comrade Canadian was undoubtedly the tallest amongst the communist leaders to fall. His martyrdom takes us to the events which led the communists to become special targets of the terrorists.

The Akali-Janata combine had won a big victory in the 1977 elections to the Punjab Assembly. The Akalis were the major partners in the combine and Sardar Parkash Singh Badal became the Chief Minister. Late Jarnail Singh Bhindran-

wale, a preacher, had been brought into politics by some leaders of the Congress (I) with the obvious calculation that he could be used to weaken the Akali Party, which alone could hope to replace the Congress (I) as the ruling party in Punjab.

In the initial stages, the anti-Nirankari campaign was the main plank of Sant Bhindranwale. Obviously, this issue was chosen because of strong prejudices the orthodox Sikhs had been having against the Nirankaris for their belief in a living Guru. A number of Nirankari gatherings in different parts of Punjab were disrupted. The Government, headed by Badal, did not provide the necessary requested protection.

It was in this background that an All-India Nirankari Sammelan was held in Amritsar on April 13, 1978. The Sammelan procession passed off peacefully but not the Sammelan itself.

Bhindranwale had simultaneously addressed a gathering within the precincts of the Golden Temple where he made an extremely provocative anti-Nirankari speech giving a call to march to the site of the Sammelan. He announced that he would himself lead the march, but he stayed back. Akali leader Jeevan Singh Umranangal then made an attempt to stop the Nirankari procession, but did not succeed. The police did not intercept the processionists. The Nirankaris had their own arrangements to defend their Sammelan. Even so, there was a clash in which more members of the Jatha, which had marched from the Golden Temple, than the Nirankaris lost their lives. This greatly roused anti-Nirankari passions. The fact that the Nirankari Guru continued with his Sammelan even after the killings was fully exploited.

Not only Bhindranwale but also many Akali leaders, like Gurcharan Singh Tohra, demanded a ban on Nirankari satsangs which were made impossible in any case. Banning of certain books containing teachings of Nirankari gurus was also demanded by them. The Congress did not take a clear stand and chose to be vague. The Akali Dal (Master Tara Singh) of Delhi which had always been a supporter and an

ally of the Congress and had the patronage of Indira Gandhi herself was not a bit less anti-Nirankari than Bhindranwale or the Akali leaders like Tohra. Even some communist formations were confused. For instance, a thesis was put forward that it would not be correct to come to the defence of the Nirankaris as there was a good deal of CIA infiltration amongst them. Subsequently, however, this was admitted to be an error.

The CPI had taken a principled and forthright stand from the very beginning. It made it clear that it had strong differences with many of the Nirankari teachings. It was pointed out, for instance, that an illusion of equality had been created between the poor and the rich. When any two Nirankaris met, they were required to touch each other's feet. At the same time, the poor were asked to be content with their lot and not have any ill-will toward the expoliting sections The Nirankaris had fought against many rituals and superstitions but had developed their own. At the same time, the CPI boldly campaigned in its writings and at public meetings in favour of the right of the Nirankaris as of all religions and religious sects to profess their religious beliefs and to worship and to hold congregations in accordance with the same, subject of course to public morality and without offensive and indecent attacks on other religions. With regard to the demand for banning their books the CPI supported the Nirankari position that those making this demand should point out the offensive portions and if they were found to be really offensive, they would be removed. Nobody ever did this, neither the Akali Party in Punjab nor the Master Akali Dal of Delhi.

This principled position of the CPI could not but incur the displeasure of Bhindranwale, his followers and other Sikh fundamentalists

From indiscriminate and target killings of the Nirankaris, including of their Guru, the Bhindranwale men in due course moved ahead to the killings of Hindus, including prominent political figures, as well as Sikhs who dared oppose his line. The Akali leadership had decided to play the game of the

Congress using the same Bhindranwale card against the Congress and the Congress Government in New Delhi that the Congress had used against them. This became clear soon after Bhindranwale's arrest in connection with the murder of Lala Jagat Narain who had strongly opposed the killings of the Nirankaris. The Akalis made his release a pre-condition for negotiating with tne Government about their charter of demands. Later, when Bhindranwale started his morcha against the arrest of two of his lieutenants, the Akali leaders controlling the management of the Golden Temple, allowed him to shift to the Guru Nanak Niwas. Soon the Akalis were to take over the morcha which was organised from the Golden Temple.

An important landmark in the activities of Bhindranwale was the murder of the DIG Police, Atwal. He was shot dead from within the Golden Temple. Every one in Punjab expected that the police would enter the Guru Nanak Niwas and would arrest Bhindranwale.

Guru Nanak Niwas is outside the premises of the Golden Temple proper and had the police entered and arrested Bhindranwale, it would not have caused the same type of injury to the Sikh religious sentiments as Operation Bluestar caused later on. In fact, most of the Sikhs expected the arrest of Bhindranwale from within the Guru Nanak Niwas. The Government in New Delhi, however, decided otherwise and in fact ruled out the police entry.

The murder of DIG Atwal caused tremendous demoralisation in the police and people were terror-stricken. Within 24 hours of the murder, the CPI in Amritsar brought out a sizeable procession condemning terrorism and for Hindu-Sikh unity. Amongst the processionists, there were almost as many Sikhs as Hindus. This raised new hopes It was taken note of by leading newspapers and it angered terrorists.

The Akali controllers of the Golden Temple allowed Bhindranwale to shift from Guru Nanak Niwas to the Akal Takhat, the second most sacred place of the Sikh religion and situated within the premises of the Golden Temple proper.

The Golden Temple was soon converted into an armed camp Arms were brought in vehicles carrying banners of "Karsewa" and "Dharam Parchar." While a general secretary of the Congress (I) declared that Bhinderanwale was only a preacher, some topmost opposition leaders falsely held that there were no arms in the Golden Temple. The communists spoke the truth fearlessly.

At that time itself, the communists had pointed out that a nexus had been built up between the terrorists and the smugglers. Within the Golden Temple one could find not only youths misguided by the misuse of religion but also some of the notorious smugglers of Amritsar.

Bhindranwale never directly demanded Khalistan but often said : "Even a bird needs a nest for itself. I do not demand Khalistan but if it is given us we will take it."

While doubtlessly Bhindranwala's real aim was another partition of India, his declared stand was : No settlement which was an iota less than the Anandpur Sahib resolution of the Akali Party.

As is well known by now, the essence of this resolution is a theocratic Punjab within India with a very weak centre and with no common economy, the centre depending on Punjab (and other states) for necessary finanaces to run even the four departments conceded to it. It is not a resolution for a strong centre and strong states as some Akali leaders claim. It is not a resolution for such powers for the states as are necessary to maintain and strengthen India's unity in diversity. It is a demand for a virtual Khalistan in which the rural vested interests grown economically powerful as a result of the Green Revolution would rule the roost. These vested interests happen to be Sikh by religion whose class interests clash with agricultural labourers and poor peasants on the one hand and traders, monopolists etc. on the other. They put forward their demands as the Sikh demands and clothe their ambitions in the garb of religion as it helps them to increase their mass base in a big way and become a powerful political force

Bhindranwale's declared strategy was to force Hindus out of Punjab due to killings of the innocent Hindus, political figures

and those Sikhs who opposed him and through Hindu-Sikh riots. He also wanted Sikhs outside Punjab to be forced to migrate to Punjab and therefore would welcome anti-Sikh riots in the name of revenge and retaliation. The communists did not fail to expose the role Bhajan Lal played more than once.

At first Bhindranwale's became a parallel government and later the only government at least in some parts of Punjab. Against this situation, the CPI had state-level and district-level rallies, public meetings and several peace marches. It also held joint rallies with the CPI (M) and some of the Naxalite groups as well as all-party joint marches. This was the time when no party dared to hold any public meeting especially in certain parts of Punjab, except the CPI either on its own or jointly with the CPI (M).

At these meetings, the followers of Bhindranwale would come and send messages to the organizers that Bhindranwale should not be named. Threats were conveyed that if Bhindranwale was criticised by name, they would attack. Invariably these messages were conveyed through police officers who advised the communists to agree. This police advice was always rejected. Public meetings protected by armed volunteers were invariably held successfully and Bhindranwale's men dared not carry out their threats. In these meetings the strategy of Bhindranwale was exposed and people cautioned against it. Fervent appeals were made for Hindu-Sikh unity. Separation of religion and politics was demanded. It was explained how the Hindu communalists by raising the slogan of revenge and retaliation were in fact playing the game of the extremists and terrorists. Many such public meetings were held in Amritsar district and elsewhere. The massive public meeting held in Moga Mandi despite threats of the terrorists and the peace march thereafter made many who had decided to migrate to change their mind and stay back. At many places communist workers risking their lives intervened effectively to prevent Hindu-Sikh clashes. In innumerable villages, Sikhs on their own assured safety to the Hindus. The Communist Party campaigns contributed a great deal towaards this.

Bhindranwale had once claimed in an interview to the journal, *Sant Sipahi*, that he was wrongly accused of being a Congress agent. It was not the Congress which had used him, it was he who had used the Congress. He could as well have claimed that it was not the Akalis who had succeeded in using him but it was he who was using the Akalis. They were the communists who were the first to point out that Bhindranwale himself was being used by imperialism out to destabilise and even disintegrate our country. acting directly through the Pakistani rulers. By now it was clear to the communists that terrorists were not only enemies of our national unity and integrity but also a counter revolutionary force ; that sooner or later the Bhindranwale men would attack them in a big way.

In fact, Amrik Singh, second in command of the Bhindranwale outfit in the Golden Temple through a press conference had already declared the communists as one of their four enemies, the other three being Hindu imperialism (meaning all Hindus), the Nirankaries, the Radha Swamis and the Kukas who believed in the living Gurus and thus were traitors within the Panth.

On February 18, 1984, Sarbjit Atri, a prominent leader of government teachers of Gurdaspur district and a former leader of the CPI-led youth organisation and a firm opponent of communalism and extremism was shot dead by the Khalistanis. Four days later, thirty-year-old clean shaven Sameet Singh, grandson of Sardar Gurbax Singh, doyen of Punjabi literature and founder of the well-known Punjabi magazine, *Preet Lari* was shot dead by a group of terrorists. Shammi, as Sameet Singh was popularly known, had taken the editorship of the *Preet Lari* after the death of Navtej Singh, a well-known Punjabi writer. He had been making powerful exposures of the terrorists. On the fateful day, his bearded and turbaned younger brother was with him. He pleaded with the terrorists that the person sought to be killed was the *Preet Lari* editor and the grandson of Gurbax Singh. This only made them more determined to make sure that he would not survive.

On May 23, 1984, was shot dead Randhir Singh of Rauki Kalan village in Faridkot district. He belonged to a former Akali family which had turned communist in 1934. He had

participated in many struggles and morchas launched by the CPI. He had taken a big jatha to the anti-terrorist Moga rally referred to above. Unsuccessful plans were made to kill some leading CPI activists of Faridkot district in this period. Sukhraj (Editor of the Naxalite journal, *Changari*) of Gurdaspur district was shot dead in this period.

Notwithstanding all this, the Bhindranwale high command's priority target was still not the communists. A member of this high command had said, 'We are not attacking the communists as yet. We know that they have the capacity to resist. We will attack them at a proper time. And when we decide to attack them, we will finish off all the communists in one day."

What this boastful spokesman of Bhindranwale did not disclose was that the terrorists were already trying to kill at least two prominent leaders of the CPI, Jagjit Singh Anand and Raj Kumar. Besides his powerful anti-terrorist writings, Anand, and also Raj Kumar, had made devastating exposure of the activities of Simaranjit Mann even when he was a serving IPS officer in Punjab and when he was in the Rajya Sabha and the Punjab Assembly A squad of former policemen organised by Mann was said to be after them. At least once, Raj Kumar had a narrow escape.

The decision to kill the communists in a big way was first taken towards the end of May 1984. According to information received from various reliable sources, the number of CPI men on the hit-list in Amritsar City alone was seven. And plans were being prepared to finish off the communists in different parts of the state Top CPI leaders, of course, had been held out threats more than once.

In June 1984 came the Bluestar operation. The CPI took the position that it could have been avoided but when it took place it had become a painful necessity. It called upon the non-Sikhs to appreciate the hurt it could not but cause to the devout Sikhs. It opposed those who had wanted to distribute sweets when the news came that Bhindranwale had been killed. At the same time, the entry of the Army into the Golden Temple had not caused the same reaction and of the same intensity in all sections of Sikhs. There was a section

which held Bhindranwale, the Government and the Alkali all responsible for it in varying degree. There was a section which held Indira Gandhi guilty. Still others put the blame on Bhindranwale and the Akalis. There was a section which felt much more unhappy and aggrieved at the death of Bhindranwale than at the entry of the Army into the Golden Temple. These included "intellectuals" coming from the landlord families.

As soon as the Army entered the Golden Temple, orders of Bhindranwale went out to kill Hindus in the villages. A big majority of the peasantry did not act on this. The Sikh agricultural labourers almost to a man opposed this call and in several villages they actively worked to save the Hindus. In some places the lead was taken by the communists while in some others they acted on their own without the existence of any organisation of theirs. It needs to be noted that the Sikh agricultural labourers are the poorest of the Sikhs in Punjab.

The Baluestar operation smashed the then headquarters of the terrorists. It dealt them a severe blow but did not finish them. In a way it enabled the terrorists to widen their base.

The separatists and their supporters roused religious passions and exploited the same to the maximum. For this the Gurdwaras too were used. In this period, much anti-communist and anti-Soviet propaganda was carried on from the Gurdwaras. It was very widely propagated that the Bluestar operation was undertaken at the instance of the *U.S.S.R.* One does not need to refute such patent and slanderous falsehoods. It may, however, be mentioned that widespread propoganda was also carried on that Indira Gandhi had sifted her residence to the Red Fort and was being guarded by Soviet securitymen. This propaganda ended only with the assassination of the Prime Minister.

On October 31, 1984, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two of her security guards, who were Sikhs. This was undoubtedly the most diabolical plan of the CIA implemented successfully. The calculated foul murder of

Indira Gandhi was looked upon by some sections of Hindus as the handiwork of Sikhs. While the majority of Sikhs condemned it as strongly as did the other patriotic Indians, some celebrated the event. This helped the Hindu communalists to propagate the false view that Sikhs as a community were responsible for it. They even exaggerated the extent of celebrations by Sikhs. A leading Hindi Daily of Patna, printed a false news about the massacre of Biharis at the hands of Sikhs in Punjab following the assassination of Indira Gandhi, when not a single Bihari or any other Hindu had been killed in Punjab at that particular time. It was the duty of all seculer forces, of the Central Government and of various states to expose the hand behind the assassination, take every possible step to prevent the justified anger taking an anti-Sikh direction and to protect Sikhs. The most distressing and unfortunate role played by a section of the ruling party in doing just the opposite and going to the extent of reportedly organising anti-Sikh riots is well-known. For the first 2-3 days at least the administration in Delhi did not act as it should have. The guilty have not been punished till today. All this has brought much grist to the mill of the terrorists.

What was the communist conduct during the days following the assassination of Indira Gandhi ? The Left Front Government in West Bengal came out with flying colours and won the appreciation of the Sikhs all over India. Even some Akali leaders of Punjab praised it. In Delhi, in Bihar and elsewhere the communists worked fearlessly to protect the Sikhs and they did protect and save many. The Punjab Istri Sabha in which the communist women work along with many non-communist progressive women was perhaps the only statewide organisation in Punjab to raise and send relief in cash and kind for the victims of anti-Sikh riots in Delhi. It was sent there by the National Federation of Indian Women. This good work of the communists (and others) could not however please the terrorists for the simple reason that they wanted widening and not norrowing the gulf between Hindus and Sikhs.

For various reasons including the presence of the Army in Punjab for quite sometime after the Bluestar operation,

terrorists took some time to recover, recoup and reorganize to start the killings again. On January 14, 1985, a young CPI cadre Naunihal Singh of Bhatinda district was shot dead. The terrorist gang which shot him was led by a notorious police deserter. The gang had a plan to kill the entire party branch (of village Koir Singhwala, of which Naunihal was the secretary).

The Rajiv—Longowal Accord was arrived at in July 1985. It was welcomed almost universally. Almost every one heaved a sigh of relief. Hopes were high that now at last peace would be restored. The terrorists of course opposed it and denounced Longowal as traitor for having signed it. Some Akali leaders too opposed it for factional reasons. Some well-meaning persons had doubts and reservations. By now it has become clear that Rajiv Gandhi signed the Accord without doing his homework and without understanding all its implications. The spirit in which it was signed was indeed laudable. However, anyone who knows the long history of the territorial dispute and the dispute about the surplus waters of the Ravi and the Beas could not but know that the crucial clauses relating to these would not be easy to implement. What was needed was a powerful campaign among the people of the states concerned to mobilise them in support of these clauses even if they felt that full justice was not being done to them. What was necessary was to call upon them to support the Accord in the spirit of give and take in the overall national interests as neither state could progress unless India progressed as a whole.

This is precisely what did not take place. The Prime Minister did not consider it necessary to do such campaining. Bhajan Lal of Haryana, on the one hand, and the Akali leadership on the other did campaign but in a manner as would make extremely dfficult the implementation of the Accord. Both claimed the Accord as their victory. For instance, Bhajan Lal claimed that in lieu of Chandigarh the Accord would give Haryana fertile areas of Abohar and Fazilka. The Akali leadership on the other hand claimed victory on the ground that the Accord would bring to Punjab not only Chandigarh but at least 500 more villages while Abohar and

Fazilka would remain with it. Similar claims and counter claims were made regarding surplus waters of the Ravi and the Beas The way the Government of India and the commissions appointed by it to determine areas to be given to Haryana in lieu of Chandigarh functioned only made matters worse. The conduct of the Akali Government was no different in relation to construction of the SYL Canal. Most of the other parties too behaved in a most opportunist manner supporing the Accord at the All-India level and in Punjab and opposing it strongly in Haryana, etc.

The result is there for all to see. The Accord is in the doldrums . 'Its implementation would not have ended terrorism but it would surely have strengthened the fight against it. It would have helped to weaken it. Even now its spirit has to be and can be saved. All patriotic forces must work to that end.

The communists can claim the credit that they alone have been honestly and sincerely working for its implementation without caring for any posssible adverse effect on their vote banks.

The election to the State Assembly took place in September 1985 soon after Sant Longowal himself had been martyred for his alleged "treachery" by the terrorists. It was obvious that the Congress wanted the Akalis to come to power. The extremists' call to Sikhs to boycott the elections proved a total failure. This however did not indicate their complete isolation. In fact, this call was considered by those who had come to support the extremists as a tactical error.

The Barnala Government came out in support of national unity and integrity. It opposed the slogan of Khalistan. For sometime it did some mass campaigning too. It agreed or was made to agree to the appointment of J.F. Riberio as the Director General of Police, Punjab. It acted when "Khalistan" was declared on April 29, 1986 from the Golden Temple. It permitted the paramilitary forces and the police to enter the Gurdawras if that was necessary to nab the terrorists.

Notwithstanding all this, terrorist activities have become widespread. Reasons are not far to seek. From the very

beginning the terrorists have had friends within the Akali Government. They still have and these friends of their do help and protect them. Political interference in favour of terrorists has not ceased altogether. The fact that Badal, Tohra and even Amrinder openly lined up with the terrorists and began actively helping them for factional reasons was a big shot in the arm of the terrorists.

Nor was this the end. Barnala himself tried to pursue a policy of appeasement and fight the extremists on their own ground Indiscriminate releases on the recommendation of the Bains Committee, unwarranted action against some police officers who acted to prevent a small town going up in flames, communally discriminatory policies to prove that his is Panthic Government, full freedom to Baba Joginder Singh and others to spread rexymetle poisonous and communal propaganda openly calling for killing etc. are some instances of the negative side of the Barnala Government. The fact that his colleagues who had been openly demanding re-call of Riberio and denouncing even genuine encounters as false ones have been silent for some time now is a good sign. There is however, no realisation in any section of the Akali leadership that successful fight against extremists requires separation of religion from politics and the state. The Hindu communalists had done great disservice when they misled vast sections of the Punjabi Hindus to disown Punjabi as their mother tongue. At the same time, even in this respect the Akali leadership too is not free from blame. It has got to learn the lesson that it is essential to separate religion and language too.

In this background the terrorists succeeded in stepping up their activities. The killings went up in a big way. For reasons which are not difficult to understand, they have concentrated on the Indo-Pak border areas of Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts. These are the areas which the Pak rulers would like to occupy at some suitable time and to virtually cut off Kashmir. That would suit the U.S. game too. Religiosity and widespread false propaganda have been made full use of when day in and day out it is being said that thousands of innocent Sikhs are being killed. It has to be frankly admitted that in parts of these two districts, the terrorists have succeeded in developing mass

support. The Sikh agricultural labourers have remained against them but they are afraid to speak up. It is in this period that many Hindu families began migrating from these areas of Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts. Some areas became almost the "liberated" areas for the terrorists. The police carried out their orders. Para-military forces would not act. The Governmet of India as well as the Punjab Government underestimated and even underplayed the grave situation.

At the same time the Hindu communal organisations holding the entire Sikh community responsible for the crimes of the terrorists and preaching revenge and retaliation began to grow stronger, even though for every two Hindus, one Sikh was also being killed by the terrorists. The anti-Sikh activities of the Hindu Shiv Sena, including arson, stabbing. at least one killing in Amritsar etc. only helped the terrorist cause. Failure of the administration and the secular forces in Punjab and also in Delhi etc. to promptly provide temporary help to the Hindu migrants till they could return to their villages also helped the Hindu communal forces which did not hesitate to exploit the migrants for anti-Sikh acts in Delhi. This too helped the terrorists. It needs also to be noted that many of the activists of even secular parties, excepting the Communist, got communally divided.

The communists launched a powerfut campaign against the terrorists as well as against the Hindu communal organisations. They did not hesitate to delare : "What the communists said about the imperialist hand behind the Khalistanis some years ago is now recognised by all. Time may also prove that the same hand is operating also through the Hindu communal organisations taking advantage of the anger of Hindu youths." The Left-led organisations showed the correct path to fight separatism. The industrial working class had acted in a big and united way even before the Bluestar operation. They had resorted to strike actions (particularly in Amritsar) against the killings and against communalism of both hues besides powerful united demonstrations in many centres. In this period, other sections too entered the field.

Against the killings of some teachers and one clerk in the Government High School, Wadali Guru, the teachers acted

unitedly. There were strikes, there were also demonstrations, in which more Sikhs could be seen than Hindus.

Against the killings of five Hindu employees of the Punjab State Electrictiy Board in Amritsar district, all the PSEB employees, the majority being Sikhs, acted unitedly.

Against the killing of a Sikh Railway foreman in Amritsar, the Hindu Railway workers joined their Sikh brothers and stopped trains till their demands were met. Bankmen have acted similarly.

In Bhatinda, the Spinning Mill workers have been unitedly facing the onslaught of the United Akali Dal with the authorities just looking on.

An A.I.T.U.C. delegation visited some of the major industrial centres of Punjab. Then came a United Trade Union delegation. A delegation of the National Federation of Indian Women toured many parts of Punjab. The first ever public meeting in a hall in Tarn Taran in this period was held by this delegation. It also visited such trouble spots as Batala Wherever it went it met the families of the vicitms and held peace rallies and meetings (In an earlier period, vetaran freedom fighter Aruna Asaf Ali had hereself led such delegations to Punjab).

In the villages of the areas which had become terrorist strongholds in Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts, the situation was very difficult. Such Sikhs as were against the terrorists dared not speak up. The communists however had the courage to do all they could to prevent migration. They openly charged that terrorists were not only enemies of India but also of the Sikhs themselves The CPI tried for an all-party campaign in the stronghold of terrorists. Not getting the necessary response they started acting on their own.

Four successful rallies were held in Amritsar district jointly by the CPI and the CPI (M)—in Tarn Taran on September 10, in Patti on September 15 in Ajnala on September 20 and in Rayya on September 24. To these rallies came not only agricultural labourers but also land-owning peasants, including youths despite their having sympathies for the exteremists under the impact of their propaganda. At three of these

rallies, Darshan Singh Canadian was the main speaker. His powerful speeches and the impact they had upset the terrorists. His speech at Patti was tape-recorded by our youth comrades and has been included in this book.

On September 22, 1986 the CPI held a massive state-level peace rally and a march at Chandigarh. A joint CPI-CPI (M) campaign is now on in many parts of Punjab.

It was in this period that a number of communists had been gunned down by the terrorists.

On March 3, 1986, Jagir Singh (a member of the CPI since 1972 and president of the Moga block Khet Mazdoor Sabha in Faridkot district), a tireles campaigner against extremists and terrorism was shot dead by the Khalistani terrorists.

On March 27, 1986, the terrorists succeeded in killing Comrade Arjan Singh Mastana (a former CPI MLA, a veteran communist leader and a member of the state executive of the party) in his home in village Gharyla in Amritsar district. The terrorists had been after him since long and it was only through deception that they could get at him.

On April 17, 1986, Baldev Raj of Jagatpura Bajaj village near Kathunangal in Amritsar district become a victim of the terrorists. He was a clerk in a government school and was an active worker of the CPI in his area.

The village of Fatehabad in the Tarn Taran sub division of Amritsar district had hit the headlines for the large-scale migration of Hindus from there. Ajit Ram, the unquestioned leader of the village poor, refused to keep quiet despite the innumerable threats held out to him. He fearleassly exposed the terrorists. He was shot dead on July 3, while asleep by a terrorist gang led by the most dreaded terrorist of the area, Dalbir Singh Billa. His eight-year-old son, Bablu, too was shot dead. He had refused to be sent out of the village and had often said, "If my father has to die, I would like to die along with him". Ajit Ram was a member of the area committee of the CPI.

The killers marched out of the village on foot. Neither the Punjab Police nor the CRP posted in Fatehabad acted to nab them. On their way out they shot dead Makhtiar Singh a firm supporter of Ajit Ram and a sympathiser of the CPI.

On August 8, 1986 the terrorists shot dead in Bua Nangli village in Amritsar district three communists : fearless and militant leader of the Istri Sabha, Bibi Guru, her husband Babu Ram, and his younger brother, Parswarth Ram. All these belonged to the CPI. Some Hindu families had migrated from this village at the time of the Bluestar operation. The remaining few were sticking on because of Bibi Guru's persuasions. Parswarth Ram was an old freedom fighter, had spent not a little time in British jails, including in the Lahore Fort and had provided Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose shelter when he was on his way out of India.

On August 31, 1986, Surinder Pal of Cheema Bath village near Rayya in district Amritsar was shot dead in broad daylight. He had joined the CPI when he was a worker and trade union activist in Talwara. At the time of his death he was a member of the area committee of his party. Darshan Singh Canadian was one of the main speakers at the meeting held to pay homage to him.

Avtar Singh of the CPI (M) too was shot dead in this period soon after the Tarn Taran rally held on September 10, 1986 to which he had brought many people.

Comrade Canadian had not reached his village Langeri in Hoshiarpur district after addressing his last public meeting at Rayya on September 24, 1986 when he was shot dead on his way from Mahilpur to Langeri. Many comrades believe that his last speech was his best. This, however, could not be tape-recorded. Some friends have made some criticism that Comrade Canadian's security was not paid the attention it deserved. We failed to realise that the terrorists would act so promptly against him whom they feared most. He of course was unconcerned about the danger.

On September 26 the terrorists gunned down Baldev Singh Mann near his village Chheena Bagga in Amritsar district. His letter to his newly-born daughter written only some days before his death is an eloquent testimony to the qualities of this Naxalite leader. We are including this letter in this book.

Earlier in this period, Comrade Nathi Ram of village Dalam in Gurdaspur district had been shot dead. A member of the Communist Party, he belonged to a very poor family. A shoe-maker, he had his shop in Badala Bangar. He was shot at by the terrorists when he was running about informing the likely targets of the terrorists who had attacked the village. Even in an injured condition, he saved others by informing them well in time. He himself was gunned down by the terrorists.

From the foregoing it is clear that the CPI has already paid a heavy price for its fight for the unity and integrity of the country. Many friends and well-wishers have been asking about the effect of the losses the party has suffered. Some weaklings may have felt demoralised but taking the party as a whole the sacrifices made by our comrades have only further strengthened its determination to fight vigourously the anti-national and counter-revolutionary forces. I have no doubt in my mind that the future will prove this assessment and history's verdict will bear it out.

Some friendly circles who are all praise for the CPI's role in the present crisis, nevertheless, feel that the Left in Punjab could have done still better. This friendly criticism is directed at the communists because there is no non-communist Left in Punjab. The criticism is not altogether unfounded but the reasons generally assigned are not correct, in our opinion. Some friends believe that growing unemployment, poverty etc. are the main causes of extremism. These facts no doubt are exploited by the extremist terrorists. United struggles against rising prices, growing tax burdens on the comman people, unemployment etc. are essential and these certainly help to fight extremist and communal forces. It cannot be said that these have been neglected or relegated to the background. This, however, in no way alters the fact that many factors are responsible for the present situation. For example :

(*a*) the imperialist game to destabilise and even disintegrate our country ;

(*b*) political ambitions of the rural rich ;

(*c*) use of religiosity and religious fundamentalism on a massive scale. Attempts to fight communalism with rival communalism make its own contribution;

(*d*) opportunism on the part of major political parties leading to sacrifice of long-term interests of the nation and of principles for short-term electoral and even factional gains. This has been a big factor in the "Punjab Demands" not being settled and the Rajiv-Longowal Accord not being implemented; and

(*e*) tendency on the part of the Centre to nibble away the autonomy which the Founding Fathers of the Constitution gave to the states and its tendency to misuse its powers.

The establishment of a terrorist-smuggler-politician nexus has made no mean contribution to the present crisis. Those who think that poverty etc. are the only or the main factor should ponder over the fact that the poorest amongst the Sikhs—the Sikh agricultural labourer as a class—is opposed to both extremism and separatism.

Let us now note some of the weaknesses of the Left in Punjab.

The Naxalites in Punjab are divided into as many as 12 groups. One of these is virtually a supporter of the Kalistanis. Another sees much merit in the Anandpur Sahib resolution. Nine groups are opposing terrorism and fundamentalism, a fact which gives lie to the propaganda made from time to time by the ruling circles that the Naxalites are the backbone of the terrorists. At the same time, some of even these groups seem to be more concerned to attack and isolate the CPI and the CPI (M) than to fight extremists. One group, for instance, has been propagating the line that it is futile to try to put pressure on the state to act more effectively against the terrorists It has been ridiculing rallies and marches for communal peace and harmony. It is not satisfied with the CPI slogan of united squads of anti-terrorist elements and of arms for self-defence. It has been attackint

As a Marxist, Darshan knew that all religions ultimately become a tool in the hands of exploiters, even those which in the beginning are banners for progressive causes. A serious attempt is now being made to make Sikhism a tool in the hands of pro-imperialist and reactionary forces. In this article, Darshan recalls the progressive and humanistic traditions of the Sikh religion and uses them most effectively to defeat the effort of the separatists to so interpret its teachings as to serve their purpose. This article is only one instance of how well-versed Darshan Singh was in our traditions and history.

When old moral values have almost disappeared from bourgeois politics and when its degeneration threatens the entire public life, it will be very useful to recall here some aspects of Darshan as a political and public figure.

Even his worst enemies could not accuse him of any misuse of his position for personal gain or any thing of that sort. The fact that a cycle was his vehicle, besides buses, speaks volumes of his honesty and integrity. Even when the terrorists shot him dead, he was cycling to his home from Mahilpur.

He was a great fighter against corruption, and that was one reason why the Mahilpur police did not act promptly even when informed about the attack on Darshan Singh.

While totally unconcerned about his own security, he requested his friends in Delhi to help the Amritsar comrades who, he said, were facing great danger.

Darshan was unanimously elected the Secretary of the Punjab State Council of the CPI when Comrade A.S. Malhotra was given responsibility at the Centre. When Comrade Malhotra returned to work in the Punjab Party, not a few thought that there would be a fight for the secretaryship. Canadian belied all such fears.

He worked tirelessly for the development not only of his own constituency but of the entire Kandi area. He never looked upon work to bring immediate relief to the people as "reformism". He had built a very well run dispensary in the village with the help of a charitable trust. The poor got the

medicines free. On his initiative, an educational society to help the poor but good students for higher education, began working in the village.

When I marched through Mahilpur in the funeral procession, I saw the entire population including women and children on the streets or on the roofs. I did not come across one face—not even of a child—which was not grim and sorrowful. I had always been a great admirer of Comrade Canadian for his bold frankness, knowledge, humility and uprightness. It was only when I saw the tremendous love and respect he commanded that I realised : What a man he was !

SATYAPAL DANG

1. A Challenge to Separatist Ideology

The crisis through which we are passing at the moment is very deep. In our country it is common for us to keep facing hardships of one kind or another. At times peasants are uprooted and labourers face starvation. But today's crisis is of a special type.

What is happening today is the question of life and death for all of us. Questions like : Whether we will remain independent or not ? Whether we will be able to put an end to the capitalist system and look forward to the establishment of socialism or not ? are being raised in the country, particularly in Punjab.

The imperialist conspiracy we are witnessing today, is not a small conspiracy. If we look at our history, we see that whenever our people were divided, and they used to be often divided on the basis of religion or caste, we fell an easy prey to slavery. But when they got united, the shackles of slavery were broken. Before 1857, there were scores of princely states in India. Using their policy of 'Divide and Rule,' the British imperialists annexed one state after another and in this way the whole country was brought under British control.

Let us take the example of Punjab and the role of the Sikh princes. While Ranjit Singh ruled over Punjab and needed help no one came to his rescue. What to say of the country, even

Comrade Darshan Singh Canadian's speech at Patti in Punjab on September 15, 1986, only a few days before he fell to the assassin's bullets.

the princes of Nabha, of Kapurthala, and specially of Patiala, never came forward to help Ranjit Singh. None of the ancestors of the people who have become self proclaimed defenders of the Panth (Sikhism) reached Mudki or Sabhraon or anywhere else It was this disunity which threw Punjab into the lap of the British. In 1857, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, all united together. Kanwar Singh, Tantia Tope and Bahadur Shah Zafar were all united. They fought against the British. But some of the Indian princes, specially of Punjab, were with the British. The imperialists were thus able to get a foothold in our country again.

Our century-old freedom struggle succeeded only when Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were all united and we became conscious of freedom to the last man. How much blood was shed, how many sacrifices were made, to rouse the people so that India might shape its own destiny ? I got the opportunity to go abroad and live in other countries. The British imperialists used to spread hatred against the Indians, maligning us as if we were not human beings but brutes. As if we knew nothing and could do nothing. Our history tells us that we were well familiar with the art of cultivation even seven thousand years ago. We had built beautiful cities with imposing buildings. We were expert in architecture when the ancestors of the British did not even know how to erect a hut.

When we launched the freedom struggle, we shed our blood and made many sacrifices. There was some success too. But the British imperialists were able to create a wedge between Hindus and Muslims with the help of Jinnah. Even then we were able to free our country. And this freedom is not a small thing. Sometimes in our hour of despair and frustration as a result of widespread starvation, poverty and corruption, we are driven to think, "What a freedom ! We have achieved nothing." But this is not the total reality. There is a world of difference between the India of 1947 and India of today. People of my generation know this well.

The country which was unable to manufacture even a needle is now in a position to manufacture by herself aeroplanes, tanks and tractors. The country where one was hardly

able to locate one primary school within a radius of 20 miles, now occupies the third position in the world in regard to scientists and engineers, next only to the USSR and the USA. When we were building the Bhakra Dam, we had to borrow the services of three hundred engineers from the United States. What a marked difference now ! Today we are in a position to send our engineers to the African and other countries. This is the result of our freedom.

No doubt, our people worked hard, but the green revolution would not have been possible without freedom. The two things worked together—the hard work by the peasants of Punjab and Haryana alone could not have achieved these results had there been no Agriculture University of Ludhiana and the Bhakra Dam. Even the modern industry could not have come up. Could one see these green paddy fields before 1947 which we are harvesting now ?

I know Amritsar of 1947-48. We were under warrants of arrest and were compelled to lead an underground life. We passed through barren fields spread over miles and miles at a stretch along with some grass and *kikkar* trees which could be seen in abundance. There is a vast difference between then and now. But our difficulties will continue till this capitalist system is there. Let us, therefore, first diagnose the disease and then take the medicine accordingly.

The road to which we are being led will ultimately Balkanise the country. It will first create bad blood between Hindus and Sikhs and then between Jats and Mazhabis (Sikh-Harijans) As a result of it, the country will be considerably weakened. The capitalists and the exploiters will rejoice at that. They will at once change their tune and may invite British imperialists to take over assuring them of their same old loyalty.

The British and the Americans would come but through their agents. They will come only when we finish off each other. They will come to collect our ashes. God knows where they will immerse them; in the Ganga or at Kiratpur. It is, therefore, necessary to understand this conspiracy.

When religious fanaticism overtakes a man, he becomes immune to logic. He harps on only one thing : My

religion; my community; we are the only great people in the world; every thing else is rubbish." Before we think of religion, let us think, we are human beings first and foremost. Religion is concerned only with one thing : how to communicate with God ? We can do it through Sikhism. Others may do it through Islam; still others through rituals. This is between us and our God. Our Guru, Baba Nanak, was asked by his adversaries, "Are you a Hindu or a Muslim ?" Because he stood for the oneness of humanity, so they asked him this question. This question is also being asked from us. "Which side you belong to ?" Do you know how Guru Nanak responded to this question ?

If I declare to be a Hindu,
I may be assassinated.
But Mussalman I am not ;
I am composed of elements,
And Nanak is my name."

Let us first become true human beings. Let us first start from here and then see where we go ? We must save our rich heritage. This Punjab, this Amritsar, our traditions of patriotism, the struggle of the Namdharis, led by Guru Ram Singh, against the British, after Ranjit Singh, and their unforgettable Malerkotla morcha. All this is our heritage. They were blown to pieces by the British guns but they cared a fig for it. None apologised.

It is wrong to suggest that all Sikhs or all Hindus are good. The guns which were fired at these valiant Namdharis were sent by one of the ancestors of Captain Amrinder Singh, the present scion of the Patiala princely family.

We fought many a battle. The Ghadarites like Baba Wasakha Singh, Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, Bhagat Singh of Sur Singh, who was martyred, belonged to the sacred soil of ours. What they fought for ? Some people say, they made these sacrifices as Sikhs. It is true that Sikhs made maximum sacrifices but they fought for this country, this land of ours, not for any one community. May it be Sohan Lal Pathak or Kanshi Ram, Baba Bhakna or Kartar Singh Sarabha, they all fought as

Indians, not as Hindus or Sikhs. This is our proud heritage. Let us not forget it. Let us not forget that even our morchas like that of Guru Ka Bagh too were not fought by Sikhs alone. People like Dr. Kitchlew courted arrest there. People like Nehru and Gandhi had sympathy with this struggle. Nehru even was put behind bars in the Nabha jail when he persisted in his support to the Akalis. The whole of it is our heritage.

The British continued their effort to "Divide and Rule." They wanted Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs fight among themselves. But we got united and won our freedom. Now we have to proceed towards our final goal : We have to put an end to this capitalist system. It is possible only if we are able to build the unity of the working masses. Only then will we be able to march forward, otherwise we will lose our independence. There will be destruction all around. The future of our younger generation will be ruined.

To those who say that they are serving religion by killing innocent people, I ask what type of service they are rendering to their religion ? What type of struggle they are waging ? Armed with stenguns and automatic rifles they move about and while passing through the bazars and streets of Tarn Taran they fire indiscriminately and kill eight *Bhayas*. In Fatehabad they assassinated Comrade Ajit Ram and his eight-year-old son Bablu. They might have a grouse against Ajit Ram who was vigorously opposing the slogan of Khalistan. But what about Bablu ? What type of Sikhs they are ? Comrade Mastana, who served the toiling masses throughout his life fearlessly, was assassinated in a very foul manner. In the garb of policemen they went to his place. He welcomed them and when he was going to bring tea for them, he was shot at in the back. They are not Sikhs They are an ugly spot on the fair name of Sikhism.

Let us think over the matter a bit seriously. When one thinks from the point of view of religion, one always considers himself to be in the right. Even if we, two groups of Jats, fall out on some matter, each group will consider itself as an aggrieved party. No group will concede its mistake. Similar is the present situation in Punjab. There is no doubt about it that

the Sikh psyche has been badly hit due to more than one reason ; the main reasons being the demolition of the Akal Takhat, the Delhi riots and so many other things. Even the Punjab Agreement has not been implemented and is hanging in the balance.

All these things are th re but let us not ignore what has been done to our Hindu brethren. Squads of Bhindranwale butchered them everywhere. First they killed the Nirankaris. Let us for the sake of argument concede that some Nirankaris could be at fault. But what is the logic in killing any Nirankari they may come across. Then comes the turn of Hindus. Let us think over the matter. Some people began to consider Bhindranwale as the reincarnation of Guru Gobind Singh while others began to argue that after Banda Bahadur, only Bhindranwale had emerged as the real general of Sikhs.

The thinking pattern of Bhindranwale was too simple. While addressing a meeting of the All-India Sikh Students Federation probably in December 1983, he argued thus, "What is our aim ? We do not demand Khalistan, but if they thrust it upon us, we will not refuse it". What a logic ! Then "Whom to fight against ?" The answer was : "Hindu imperialism". "What is Hindu imperialism ?" The simple answer was : "Every Hindu."

Talking about the old bravery of Sikhs, he declared, "Only thirty-five Hindus fall to the share of each Sikh. Thus each of them will be finished." Then, "Who else was the enemy ?" The answer was : "Each and every communist." What was the crime of the communists ? They fought for the Punjabi Suba and then its correct demarcation. It is we communists who are always in the forefront in the struggles of the downtrodden, of the workers, of the peasants and we never shun sacrifices. They say, "They are atheists". Yes, we do not believe in God. No one can compel us to do that. We have our own methods to do things. Even the believers are welcome to become members of the Communist Party. All types of believers, Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus are welcome to our fold. These people are dreaming of finishing all the communists, not only of India but of the whole world. Just see their worldwide front.

They do not stop there. Now comes the turn of all those who believe in the living Gurus. The Namdharis, the Radha Swamis and the Nirakaris are to be dealt with in the same way. Then what about the famous saying of the Tenth Guru, "With the blessing of the Almighty, this sect has been set up; all Sikhs are ordained to accept the Adi Granth as their Guru" When the Gurudom had been bestowed upon the Adi Granth, what type of Sikhs are we who bow before the so-called innumerable Sadhus (Saints). Are we not placing these saints and the Adi Granth on equal footing. No Sikh worth his salt should bow anywhere else except before the Adi Granth. There is no harm in giving due respect to these saints or offer them proper salutation. But what about those living Gurus who say, "We will finish off all the opponents ?"

They go even further. There comes the turn of traitors within the Panth. Who are these traitors ? At one time even Tohra was a traitor and the same was true of Sant Longowal, Parkash Singh Badal and Surjit Singh Barnala. Now they have changed their priority. The turn of Barnala and Balwant Singh comes first and Badal and Tohra are to be dealt with later on. That is their programme. May I ask them a simple question ? "If all others do not have the right to live under your scheme of things, then only you people will be there to rule and to be ruled". This is the type of Sikhs they are ! They are Sikhs who flout the principles of Sikhism.

If only appearance is to determine whether a person is a Sikh or not, then what will be the fate of those scores of Sikh youngmen from the Sikh families who are clean shaven ? Does one become a real Sikh if he observes only five rituals (Five '*Kakkas*') ? The observance of *Kakkas* is good and even people like me would be pleased to greet such people with pleasure. But does it mean that Sikhism ends with it ? No, Sikhism is much more than that. When the Tenth Guru was asked to define the Khalsa, he declared, "A true Sikh is he who stands by the poor. A true Sikh is he who opposes/ destroys the sinners." This is the real spirit of Sikhism. Let us take the example of an outwardly beautiful pitcher. It

is good as a showpiece. But its real usefulness lies not in its outward appearance but what it actually contains. Does it contain life saving water or poisonous liquor? This is true of all religions, be it Hinduism or Islam. You will find people of different kinds but most of them are toiling people. Everywhere there are also smugglers, black-marketeers, touts, exploiters etc Sikhs are no exception to this.

Can anybody dare say that these categories of people are not there among the Sikhs? Let us once again remind ourselves of the above-quoted saying of the Tenth Guru and assess the actions of the terrorists on its basis. Are they serving the poor? It is no bravery to kill the unarmed *Bhayas* the shop-keepers, the bus-passengers, etc.

Now take another form of "bravery." There was a news item about Harjinder Jinda, the alleged assassin of General Vaidya In a statement Jinda and his companions had threatened that if their companions arrested in the said case were not released, they would play havoc with the authorities. They have threatened to kill S.B. Chawan, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra and Bal Thakeray, the Shiva Sena chief. They also intend to below up the Radio Station and the State Secretariat. Do we know what will happen if they succeed? They themselves will go in the hiding leaving the innocent Sikhs outside Punjab to the mercy of hooligans. T ey argue thus: "To achieve their objectives, nations have to make sacrifices." What a logic! If any sacrifice is to be made, let them make it themselves. Why throw the innocent people in the jaws of death? If they are so much determined to make sacrifices, let them jump into the canals or hang themselves on some tree and let the people see how the sacrifice is made. Why want to sacrifice fifty lakh of Sikhs living outside Punjab? A very stupid logic indeed!

For this situation the whole Akali leadership, the Congress Government, the Hindu communalist etc. are responsible. They have committed Himalayan blunders All this fuss is created by the communal-separatist politics. One may ask, how? Let us take the example of the demand for a Punjabi-speaking state. The simple demand should have been: When

are you going to reorganise the whole of the country on linguistic basis let Punjab also be reorganised on the same basis. But this was not done by the Akali leadership. Apparently, they were demanding a Punjabi speaking state but in their heart of hearts they were trying for a Sikh majority state. Under the same logic even now they demand the inclusion of Ganga Nagar District of Rajasthan and Guhla and the Karnal areas of Haryana into Punjab. Why not Una and Kangra of Himachal Pardesh and the Jammu area of Jammu & Kashmir ? Excepting two sub-divisions of Jammu, the rest of it is Punjabi speaking area. Because these areas, though Punjabi speaking, are overwhelmingly Hindu majority areas, that is the root cause of the problem.

Now, what about the Hindu communalists ? They refused to accept Punjabi as their mother-tongue. Hence they would not support the demand for a Punjabi speaking state. When all other states like Maharashtra, Bengal, Gujarat, Andhra etc, were reorganised on linguistic basis, why not support the demand for a Punjabi-speaking state ? They were apprehending a Sikh majority area The aims of both types of communalists, Sikhs and Hindus, converged. The Akalis wanted a small state as it would give them a predominantly Sikh majority area. The Hindu communalists wanted 'Mahan' Punjab aiming at a predominantly Hindu majority state. Both of them wanted to strengthen the vote-banks on communal lines, not on the basis of their actual performance in the political field. For this purpose, they raised the bogey, "Religion is in danger". Once the atmosphere is surcharged on communal lines, the voter does not bother about other issues, like unemployment, adequate prices for paddy and wheat, high cost of inputs and intermittent breakdown or failure of electricity etc. If all these issues are raised and answered then the voter behaves differently and he may go against these parties. Excepting 1977, when emergency proved disastrous for Indira Gandhi, in all other elections people were divided on communal lines in Punjab.

Now has come the poisonous snake of Khalistan. It has thrown all other questions in the background. It has almost

completely polarised the Punjabi people on communal lines. Hence amity is the first casualty. All the problems of the people are forgotten.

That is why I say that religion and politics should be separated. Some wanted to invoke the authority of the Gurus to yoke religion and politics together. But even the Gurus did not do it in this sense. Had it been so, where was the need for a separate Akal Takht ? It could have been easily done from within the Golden Temple itself. Thus religion, the Golden Temple, was separated from politics, the Akal Takht. Moreover, the situation then was different. The kings used to rule on the basis of their so-called Divine Rights'. There used to be no constitution, no legislature. There were no means of propaganda like the newspapers, radio or public meetings etc. So when Aurangzeb used to do something wrong in the name of religion, he could only be fought back from the platform of religion as was done by the Gurus.

These days, religion and politics cannot go together. The Constitution is there and if it is not acceptable we can amend it or can have a new one. If now we combine religion and politics, the results would be complete disaster. How ? The religion which our *Rishis, Munis* and the Gurus gave us is based on truth and goodness. This religion tells us to mould ourselves in the image of God, to be truthful and to earn our livelihood by honest hard work. But, on the contrary, today's politics of the bourgeois parties tells a different tale. It is based on exploitation and treachery. On the one hand they occupy ministerial chairs and pretend to fight the extremists but on the other hand, extremists travel with them in their official cars. Then in order to hoodwink the people they deny such well-known facts. They also encourage smugglers to carry on their business accross the border. Such is their politics.

All these criminals take shelter in the Gurdwaras and Sarais. Why cannot they stay elsewhere ? We do not want scoundrels to enter holy places. If at all they want to visit the religious places, let them leave after paying their respects.

When terrorism just started, the Government used to allege that terrorists were taking shelter in the Gurdwaras. Tohra would deny it in the very presence of the Adi Granth. Tohra then was the President of the S.G.P.C. and the whole world knew that he was telling a white lie. If at all he was under some compulsion to tell lies, he should have kept a respectable distance from religion and should have left the religious preaching to the preachers and the hymn singers.

I, therefore, say it with full force at my command that if we try to run religion and politics together, we would face the same disaster time and again, which we have experienced during all these years. My submission is that each one of us is very much disturbed over these happenings We do concede that the Sikh psyche has been badly injured. It may be the sad destruction of the Akal Takht or the painful Delhi riots or whatever has happened to innocent Hindus in Punjab. All these things are really painful.

Let us learn some lessons from history. The Sixth Guru fought against the armies of Shahjehan and the Tenth Guru took up the cudgels against Aurangzeb and the Princes of Baidhar. By that time Harimandir Sahib of Amritsar and the basement of the Akal Takht had already been constructed by the Sixth Guru. There was Keshgarh Sahib at Anandpur, where the five Sikhs were baptised. But why both these Gurus did not launch their struggles from within the Golden Temple? For this purpose the Tenth Guru built a fort about a mile away from Keshgarh Sahib. They fought battles in the open because they had respect for these holy places.

It would have been wise for Tohra and Bhindranwale to launch their battle from outside the Gurdwaras, like the Babar Akalis, the I.N.A. and the Naxalite youth. And if one launches the struggle from within the Gurdwaras clash with the Government is bound to follow. If one mixes up religion and politics in the modern age the results are obvious.

Let us now take the question of the demands of the Akalis First, the question of Chandigarh. This is a common demand of the Punjabis, not of Sikhs alone, and has nothing to do with religion. Similar is the posi ion regarding the demand of the

river waters and industrialisation of Punjab. Only the declaration of Amritsar as a holy city, relaying of the Gurbani Kirtan from All India Radio and enactment of the All India Gurdwara Act were religious demands. But so far as the common demands of the Punjabis are concerned, why not take into confidence all the Punjabis and the rest of the political parties ?

There is also another interesting aspect of the situation. After the elections of 1977, the Akalis were in power in Punjab along with the Janata Party and Badal and Barnala shared power at the Centre. Why did not they raise these demands at that time and ask Morarji Desai to settle them ? They never bothered about them at that time. Then why this fuss now ? This is a very important question. And never answered. But even now they should have been a little wiser. Being a Jat I can say with confidence that we seldom use wisdom and only follow a beaten path.

We know M.G Ramachandran, the leader of the A.I.D.-M.K. He too had certain demands. There are two ways of achieving our objectives Either we are so strong that we are able to bring the opponents to their knees and force them to accept our demands or use diplomacy and strike a bargain. Ramachandran followed the latter method. Some may feel touchy if I repeat that we are not wise enough. But let us refer to history. What happened during Ranjit Singh's days. The British came only after his death. What actually happened was that we ourselves started a fratricide struggle and this paved the way for an easy victory of the British. The role of the Dogras is well known. That brought the end of the Sikh rule.

In 1967, we formed a coalition ministry with Sardar Gurnam Singh as the Chief Minister. Comrade Satyapal Dang was also one of the Ministers. Then what happened ? Who was responsible for its downfall ? Sardar Lachhman Singh Gill of Moga, an Akali, performed the holy task. The second time Badal was overthrown by Gurnam Singh. The third time Badal was again the Chief Minister. Now it was the turn of Tohra and Talwandi. They reached the Akal Takht and levelled very

serious charges against Badal. Where is the end of this process ? By returning them with an overwhelming majority of 73, they have avenged the excesses committed against them. They remained together only for a few days.

No doubt Rajiv Gandhi has not implemented the Punjab Accord and all the democratic forces should get together for getting the Accord implemented. But why have these people fallen out ? They should have remained united and launched a struggle against the Centre. Now Badal and Tohra are the victims of self-righteousness. They say, "We are the only true Sikhs. Barnala is a traitor of the Panth. Have no truck with him."

But may I ask these gentlemen a very simple question ? If they were really against the Accord, why did they ask for votes in the name of the late Sant Longowal and the Accord. They should have boycotted the elections and rejected the Punjab Accord. Sukhjinder Singh and Badal got elected under the banner of the Akali Party with Barnala as its president, but their ambitions not having been fulfilled they are raising hue and cry and once again there is the slogan of the Panth in danger. This disunity of theirs strengthens the hands of the Centre. Therefore, my submission is that more than half of the problems are the creation of the Akali leaders themselves.

Now a few things about the role of the Punjabi Hindu communalists on the question of Hindi and Punjabi. They mislead our Hindu brethren on this question time and again. Similarly, they took a wrong position on the question of the Punjabi speaking state. The same Jana Sangh, which later had been taking part in the coalition governments with the Akalis, was mainly responsible for this. They went to the extent to let arson and looting break loose in cities like Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur and Panipat in order to stall the formation of the Punjabi Suba. They left no stone unturned in misleading the Hindu masses. The rulers at Delhi in order to retain their power are following the same old "Divide and Rule" policy of the British imperialists. They have always been setting

Hindus and Sikhs against each other. Thus they are able to secure the votes of Hindus and the Harijans of Punjab.

Let us take the question of Khalistan. Some friends think that if they are able to create Khalistan, a big mission of the Gurus will be fulfilled. At the time of their daily "Ardas" (Prayer) Sikhs recite the couplet : "The Khalsa will rule." We interpret it that the Sikhs must rule because the Gurus have ordained it. Let us not forget the couplet was not written by the Tenth Guru but was written by one of the 52 poets of his court. And the couplet was written at a time when Sikhs had already been fighting against the misrule of the Mughals for over a century leading a very hard life in the jungles. Guru Govind Singh had very clearly said about the people who should rule. I am sorry to say that I am not a learned man but those who are, they never look at such couplets as :

"Bheron se main Sher banaon."

("I will mould sheep into lions," meaning thereby that the downtrodden people will be turned into brave fighters). The next line makes the point more clear :

"Rathan se main Rank laraon."

Rathan means landlords and *Rank* i.e. share-cropper, the poor peasant. ("I will make the poor tillers fight the landlords.")

Again : "Bhoop Ghariban ko kehlaon."

Bhoop means the king; meaning thereby that henceforth he would crown the poor as kings; and not Sikhs, neither Hindus nor Muslims alone.

Then what next ?

"Chirion se main Baaz toraon,
Sawa Lakh se ek laraon,
Tabeh Gobind Singh naam kahaon."

(I will enable the sparrows (the weak) to tear out the falcons (the cruel). I will enable one man to fight against one lakh enemies. Then and only then I would have the right to be called Gobind Singh).

I, therefore, submit that Sikhism is the common heritage of the whole mankind. That is why under all difficult cir-

cumstances Muslims came to Sikhs' rescue at every step. In the battle of Bhanghani, Peer Budhu Shah sacrificed all his four sons. His seven hundred soldiers fought on the side of the Guru. When Guru Gobind Singh had to abandon Anandpur Sahib, a Muslim chief gave him asylum at Bhatha Sahib while accommodating him in the private room of his daughter. From Chamkaur Sahib, he was taken away by Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan on their shoulders declaring him as "Uch da Pir", otherwise it was not possible for him to break that seige. When, while roaming in the jungles of Machhiwara, he was traced out by the enemy, his childhood tutor Noor-ud-din was brought to identify him. He did not do it. Why? Because the Guru fought against oppression without any discrimination. He followed in the footsteps of Guru Nanak Dev and others who declared :

First of all, out of His light
Were Created all the human beings.
Out of this light was created the whole universe.
None is good, none is bad
In each shines His light.
It is because of His light that everybody gets light.

or

Our father is one, all of us are His children.

When the *Adi Granth* was compiled, along with the *Gurbani* of six Sikh Gurus, the writings of other 30 saints were also included among whom were seven Muslims. There were Harijans too. Brahamins and other Hindu *bhakts* (devotees) were also there. When they built the Golden Temple, four doors were kept one each on the four sides. Whosoever comes there, to whichever religion or caste he may belong, is welcome. The same concept '*Pangat*' and '*Sangat*' was responsible for his quarrel with the Princes of Baidhar. They did not like the downtrodden people to sit with them in the same '*sangat*' (congregation) and same '*pangat*' (to share the meals on equal footing). A Muslim Saint, Mian Meer, was selected to lay the foundation stone of the Golden Temple. This is a lesson of the Guru for those who say, "Only thirty-five Hindus

fall to the share of one Sikh." The Nirankaris have already been covered. Next will be the turn of the Namdharis and then of the communists. What a malice ! What a hatred !! It has absolutely no connection with Sikhism at all.

Now, the next point. This is about the Barnala Government which we have voted to power. From our point of view, this Government has many shortcomings. But it has done certain good things also. In spite of the shortcomings, we think this government should stay for the moment. Some people want to call out the army and want the dismissal of the Government. Badal and Tohra daily harp on this point. But if the Barnala Government falls, what next ? It will be followed by the Presidential Rule. We have already tasted it enough. Even the military may be called out. There will again be excesses. Extremism may flare up again. Already our people feel that at some places the army has committed excesses. Hence the Barnala Government is better than the Presidential Rule or the army rule. They have given certain concessions to the people. The main thing is that this government has taken cudgels against the extremists which is necessary to save the unity and the integrity of the country. They have also written off three hundred crores of rupees which were due from the people on account of 'Pucca Khalas'. It is a good thing With the pressure of the masses it can be compelled to give more concessions.

But there is the other side also. The Ministry is not a united team. Some of them carry the extremists in their official cars. Some aid and abet them. One worthy has gone to the extent of slapping a sub-inspector on his refusal to release a known bad character. Even his uniform was torn off.

If this government takes a good step, it should be supported, but on negative points it must be opposed. Sometimes this government takes a communal stance. For example, if the people, may be Hindus, may be Sikhs, are uprooted, they must be helped and rehabilitated. There should be no discrimination on communal grounds. Similarly, there should be no discrimination-in providing employment and nominations to marketing

committees. It is better and more democratic if proper elections to these bodies are held.

The wide gulf which has been created between Hindus and Sikhs has to be bridged somehow or the other. Many a time brothers do fall out with each other. Wise people are those who bring the disputing parties together, not those who further widen the rift. We daily face family disputes over trivial matters. The elders of the family put their heads together and settle them. If they fail, relatives are asked to intervene. Even the authority of the Panchayat is invoked. If in these small matters some people take to arms, the family will surely go to the dogs.

Here the arms have played their trick. How it all happened, most of the people are in the know of it. Let us now control these armed people. We have to travel very far. Let us mobilise all the workers, peasants, the middle class students, women and other people to win our ultimate battle against capitalism. If we have to strengthen our independence, let us put an end to exploitation and bring in a new socio-economic order where each individual is able to get employment and justice; social, economic and political. Such a justice is possible under socialism only. Let us learn to wage this struggle and march forward. Only then we can lead India to a better future.

2. Are Terrorists 'Gursikhs' ?

For the last five years the people of Punjab are suffering from gangsterism perpetrated by the terrorists, The daily showering of bullets has wounded Punjab grievously and its soil is drenched in blood. In the Punjab which laughed, sang, danced and prospered, today there is nothing but terror and fear all around. Hundreds of innocent Hindu brethren, dissenting Sikhs, workers and leaders of political parties opposed to extremism—children, old people, men and women—have lost their precious lives at the hands of these marauders. Hundreds of Hindu families have been uprooted from Punjab. In the rest of the country, fifty lakh Sikhs face the prospect of being thrown out. Indian opponents of Khalistan living in Britain and Canada had also been killed by terrorists. These criminals had not spared even the 325 and odd innocent passengers of Air India's *Kanishka* Boeing, a majority of whom had nothing to do with Indian politics. The murderous asaults in the Daresi Grounds of Ludhiana, in the Krishna Nagar locality of Amritsar and near Muktsar, have further exposed the inhuman motives of these killers.

Why these massacres ?

What aim is sought to be achieved by these massacres ? Which is that religion which permits such inhuman black deeds ?

The terrorists' aim obviously is to divide India and establish Khalistan.

What is their *modus operandi*? A mass exodus of the Hindu population is sought to be caused by this white terror so that, as a reaction, the entire Sikh community is uprooted from all over India by the Hindu communalists. They hope to achieve this double purpose through communal riots. What do they rely on? They rely on conservative, fundamentalist elements among Sikhs whose sentiments have been hurt on the ground of religion.

What is their class base? It is the Sikh vested interests, like landlords and rich capitalist farmers.

Who are their main patrons? American imperialism and its prop—the Pakistan dictator Zia-ul-Haq.

The great tragedy of today's Punjab is that terror, this betrayal of the country and these inhuman atrocities are being staged in the name of that Sikh religion whose great Gurus had laid the basis of Sakhism on the relentless struggle against feudal oppression of their times and on the well-being of the entire mankind and mutual love. The terrorists by using religion have succeeded in securing co-operation of a section of the Sikh community. That is why it is most essential that we judge their deeds by the yardstick of ideology and traditions of Sikhism.

The Sikh movement, which arose in the 15th and the 16th centuries, was an inseparable part of the Bhakti movement of the renaissance. India of those days was caught up in the denigration of the Sanatanist Hindu religion and the oppression of the fanatic despotic kings and chieftains who ruled in the name of Islam. It was this situation that Guru Nanak had thus described :

The 'Kalyug' is the cutter (and)
Kings are butchers,
Religion has taken wings (and) flown away;
In the 'Amavas' of falsehood,
The moon of truth is not visible.

The Sikh movement was in both these respects a powerful protest movement in a religious form. At the same time, it did synthesise some of the positive aspects of both the Hindu and Muslim religions. On the whole, it was a progressive movement in the interest of the people.

The kings and feudal lords of those times justified their exploitative and oppressive regimes by propagating that these were the 'God's Gifts'. The old religious leaders had been able to impress on the common people that these kings had secured their kingdoms as a reward of their '*tapa*', and such fables as, "kingdom from '*tapa*', and from kingdom to hell", were common.

Guru Nanak frontally challenged and rejected such reactionary views. He called the contemporary kings thus :

> Kings are tigers,
> Officials are dogs,
> They go and disturb the peaceful citizens,
> Whether they are awake or asleep.

In order to demolish the alleged God-given superiority of these feudal kings and to expose them in their true colours he called God the '*Sacha Patishah*', and said that "no king was equivalent to the God" whom he considered to be an embodiment of the totality of good values. He thus declared that all the kings on earth were in reality false '*Patishah*'. The Guru not only expressed this view, he even compared Babar's attack on India as "the marriage-party of sin brought out from Kabul. He is demanding charity by force". When the oppressor Babar's army murdered innocent people, Guru Nanak protested even to God, saying, "Such was the beating (that the people) cried out and were you not (even) moved ?" Because of such a denunciation of Babar, the Guru was to suffer imprisonment in one of his jails.

In defence of the poor

The Sixth Guru Har Gobind had to wage an armed fight:

against the kingdom of Jahangir. When a Maharashtrian saint Ram Dass asked the Guru about his aims, he said :

> From inside (I am) a Fakir
> But have the appearance of richness,
> Weapons are to protect
> The poor, and slay the oppressor.

In the closing years of the 17th century, Guru Gobind Singh created the 'Khalsa Panth' to fight against the oppressive rule of Aurangzeb. He did set up the 'Amritdhari Singhs' but at the same time he also accepted the 'Sehajdharis' into the 'Sikh Panth'. Sometime ago, the well-known Sikh historian, Khushwant Singh, published a 'hukamnama' of Guru Gobind Singh written in his own hand. The following sentences occur therein :

> This order of the Guru is addressed to Bhai Mohkam Chand, Karam Chand and Dharam Chand. Repeat Guru's name. He shall grant you your birthright. You are my 'Khalsa'.

Who is 'Khalsa' ?

Whereas the 10th Guru wrote a good deal about life-style, traditions and the appearance of the 'Khalsa', he also described its main characteristics as :

> 'Khalsa' is the one who protects the poor.
> 'Khalsa' is the one who destroys the oppressor,

It is clear from this that the Guru did not ascribe a narrow meaning to the 'Khalsa'. Nor did he present the 'Khalsa Raj'. as only a 'Sikh Raj'. For example :

> I shall make lions of sheep,
> I shall make downtrodden fight the lords,
> The poor shall be enabled to be called the kings,
> I shall make the sparrows defeat the falcon,
> I shall make one (soldier) fight with one and a quarter lakh,
> Then alone I am called by the name of Gobind Singh.

It is evident that the Guru was not striving to make Sikhs alone the kings, but the entire poor were sought to be raised to that status. His liberation army was composed of poor peasants and his opponents were feudal lords.

Influenced by this ideology of the Guru, lakhs of Hindus became Sikhs and many Muslims also joined the Sikh ranks. This was the Guru's 'Sant Khalsa' which put up a hundred-year long struggle against the Mughal oppression and in this great fight became the support of the support-less, strength of the strengthless, defence of the defence-less, the honour of the dishonoured and the pride of the prideless.

Who are the oppressors ?

In the context of the teachings of the Gura let us examine as to where these terrorists who resort to terror in the name of Sikh religion stand.

At the international plane the most oppressive and cruel power is US imperialism and its allies. They have in the last forty years slaughtered millions of peopls fighting for their national liberation in Korea, Vietnam, Palestine, Nicaragua, Bangladesh, South Africa and other countries. In this, traitors like Zia-ul-Haq are collaborating with America.

In our own country, whichever political party may be ruling the real power of the State has been in the hands of big capitalists, landlords and capitalist farmers. Other exploiters, like big traders, black-marketeers and smugglers are collaborating with them or are their offsprings. The entire working and middle class people—Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims Christians and others—are struggling against their exploitation and oppression.

On these two fronts, these extremist-terrorists do not utter a single word against imperialists and their collaborators, the Indian vested interests. On the other hand, they themselves stand with the exploiters and oppressors. At the same time,

they resort to murderous attacks on the oppressed, innocent and helpless Hindus and Sikhs.

The other basic principle of Sikhism is equality and mutual love of the whole mankind. In the entire teachings of the Sikh Gurus, there is not the slightest hint of any ill-feeling against any religion, community or caste. Taking the entire mankind to be the children of God, they have declared again and again :

> There is one Father and we are his children,
> The light burning (in the hearts) of all is the same (His) light,
> From that light there is the light among all (hearts) And,
> (I) do not have any enemy (and) none is a stranger (to me),
> I am close to everyone.

Keeping this approach in view, Guru Arjun Dev included the '*Bani*' of the main Hindu, Muslim and the so-called untouchable saints in the 'Guru Granth'. The following *sloka* of Kabir is meaningful in this context :

> First the Allah created light,
> All people belong to His creation,
> Entire world was born out of the one light,
> Who is (then) good (and) who is bad ?

This truth is also reflected in Guru Nanak's statement "All are known as His, none is viewed an outsider". The last words of the Sikh prayer are "The name of Nanak shall inspire high spirits. You ordain the good of all". No section of society—Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians or the Scheduled Castes—is excluded from this *all*.

This Sikh ideology which gave equality and justice to the entire people was regarded by the Mughal kings as a mortal danger for their feudal system. In order to uproot it they on the one hand, resorted to severe repression on Sikhs, on the other, in order to mislead the common Muslim people, they called this repression a 'jehad' of Islam against infidels. Despite

the Muslim environment and oppression, the Gurus stuck to their humanistic ideology. For example :

—For laying the foundation-stone of the Darbar Sahib (Harmandir), the Guru selected a Muslim saint, Mian Mir.

—In order to give equal status to all religions and castes, the Darbar Sahib had gates on all the four sides, so that all are free to visit the place.

By the time of the Tenth Guru, the oppression of the Mughal rulers had touched new heights. Guru Tegh Bahadur had attained martyrdom and Sikhs had started armed struggle against the Mughal rule in which the Tenth Guru had sacrificed his entire family. Despite this great tragedy there is not a single word expressing hatred against Islam or the Muslim people in the Tenth Guru's 'Bani'. He still stood for the good of all.

Muslim followers

It was because of this that while on the one hand lakhs of oppressed Hindus were joining the ranks of Sikhs, many Muslim followers and devotees also stood with him. As an example, in the battle of Bhangani, Sayyed Budhu Shah of Sadhaura's 700 followers and all his four sons fought on the Guru's side against the imperial army. When after facing great difficulties, the Guru along with many Sikhs left the fort at Anandpur for the Malwa area, the imperial army was in hot pursuit. In that dangerous situation the person who provided refuge to the Guru at the Bhatha Sahib was a Muslim Pathan chief. Later on, two Muslim brothers, Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan, took the Guru out of the encirclement of the imperial army at the Garhi of Chamkaur Sahib When another contingent of the Mughal army was able to encircle the Guru at Machhiwara, his childhood teacher of Persian, Maulvi Nuruddin, was brought to identify him, but he having recognised him, still said that the captive was "not Gobind

Singh". It was the ideology of "oneness of mankind" on the basis of which Bhai Ghaniaya offered water and nursed the wounded in the battle irrespective of the fact whether they were Muslims or Sikhs. The 'Bani' of the Tenth Guru testifies to this in these words :

The last resting place and the
Mosque are the same;
The 'pooja' and the 'namaz' are the same;
Humanity is one (though)
It gives the impression of the multitude.
All the different 'Devtas'
Turks, Gandharvas, Hindus,
Of different lands;
Of varied custumes;
(yet they) Have similar eyes, similar ears,
Similar body and similar profile,
It is but an admixture of
Dust, air, water and fire,
The God, the formless (is the same)
The same are the *Puranas*, and the *Quran*,
One is their form (and)
One is their structure.

Let us now compare the high ideals of the Tenth Guru of owning up the entire oppressed people and to "recognise the entire human race as *one*" with the ideology of the present-day extremist-terrorists.

When in the last days of March 1986, "the five-member Panthic committee" made the declaration of 'Khalistan' from the Akal Takht, they also simultaneously issued a letter in which it was mentioned that the committee "warns all apologists of the government and Hindus" that misdeeds shall not be overlooked and they shall be set right", i.e. murdered. Hindus constitute half of Pnnjab's population. An overwhelming majority of the Sikhs have voted for Barnala's Akali Dal and enabled it to form the government. On the issue of Khalistan, all the parties are against extremism and are with the Punjab and the Central governments. It is clear thus that the Panthic committee shall "set right" all them, some today and others tomorrow. Consider then, who will be left untouched.

'Malechh' Khalsa

In 1983, under the auspices of the main fountainhead of inspiration of the terrorists, Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, the All-India Sikh Students Federation had issued a manifesto wherein it listed its enemies thus : In the first place, 'Hindu imperialism', i.e. the entire Hindu population. On this basis, Sant Bhindranwale had estimated that each Sikh (lion) had to deal with thirty-five Hindus (sheep). In the second place were the communists of India as well as of other countries of the world—though the communist parties rule one-third of the world and fight for the oppressed people in most of the countries. In the third place were counted all those who followed any living 'Guru', i.e. all the Radha Swamis, all the Namdharis, all the Nirankaris etc. And, in the last category were the 'traitors' of the Sikh 'Panth', wherein, at one time, along with the martyred Sant Longowal, Badal and Tohra were also there. They have been relegated to the background now and in the list of 'traitors' now occur Barnala and Balwant Singh and all their supporters.

Some important questions arise out of this :

1. Did any of the Sikh Gurus call all the followers of another religion as enemies ?
2. Did the Gurus call any of the dissenters as traitors and did they get such people murdered ?
3. Did the Gurus regard those who worshipped a living Guru as their enemies ?

Answers to these questions are in the negative.

Then who is that Guru whose Sikhs these terrorists-extremists are ? The reality is just the opposite. Aurangzeb used to say, accept either Islam or death. Terrorists say, accept Khalistan or be ready to die. Mir Mannu used to execute every rebel Sikh along with his family who dared to put up fight in the interests of the people. The terrorists track down each individual opponent of Khalistan, try to kill him and, if possible, his family even. The readers should judge for themselves whether these Sikhs are those of the Gurus or they belong to Aurangzeb.

In the glorious history of Sikhs, some such twists came that instead of the 'Sant Khalsa', a 'Malechh (ignominious) Khalsa' took over. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, it was the 'Malechh Khalsa' which assumed control. It resorted to gangsterism and destroyed the Sikh Raj from its very roots. During the attacks of Ahmed Shah Abdali, the 'Sant Khalsa' put up a fight of life and death against him. But some of the then Rajas of the Sikh states of Malwa touched his feet.

In the beginning of this century, the Ghadar Party heroes, who had been awarded death sentence and life-term imprisonment in the Andamans by the British for having raised the banner of revolt, were ostracised from the community by those nominal Sikhs who controlled the Darbar Sahib. The same worthies had offered 'saropa' to the murderer of Jallianwala Bagh, General Dyer. Those Sikh trouble-makers who had resorted to massacre and plunder of innocent people in 1947 were also a part of the 'Malechh Khalsa'.

The extremists-terrorists of today are misled and are following on the footsteps of the 'Malechh Khalsa' and not the 'Sant Khalsa'. In the perspective of history, such vandalism has many a time brought insult and injury to the country, but it has never been able to defeat the abiding human values. The same fate shall meet it now. No better evidence need be recalled here. The great Guru Nanak himself had said :

Falsehood shall crumble,
(And) truth shall ultimately prevail.

3. Extremists Trekking Towards Enslavement, not Liberation

Like the concept of Pakistan, that of Khalistan is also the product of the "Divide and Rule" policy of British imperialism. In the years just before Independence, and in the subsequent period, a disruptive and separatist slogan like that of Khalistan could not evoke any response from the Sikh masses because the Indian people had been through terrible experience of extensive damage due to partition and because large sections of the Sikh masses were with the national democratic mainstream. That is why even the communal Sikh leaders hesitated from talking about a Sikh Raj. That is why when in the late sixties a hypocritical political leader like Jagjit Singh Chauhan raised the mischievous slogan of Khalistan, many people took it as a joke.

However, in 1972, the Akali leaders through the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, by raising the slogan of a Punjab with the '*Bole Bala*' of Sikhs, laid the basis of a Sikh Raj. On the other hand, some unprincipled and power-seeker leaders of the ruling Congress Party, in order to embarrass and weaken the Akali Dal, began to support and patronise a handful of Khalistanis. In 1981, the Alkali leaders, on the persuasion of the American Sikh Ganga Singh Dhillon, echoed slogans like, "Sikhs are a separate nation" and "discrimination against Sikhs". This provided an ideological basis for Khalistan.

Jug Bant (Hindi Daily), 29 July, 1986

Then Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale started propagating the demand for Khalistan indirectly. In April 1986, the Damdami Taksal, the All-India Sikh Students Federation and the Panthic Committee made the 'Khalistan' declaration from the Golden Temple and asked the foreign countries to accord it recognition. And, today, the 'Khalistani' separatists are fighting an armed battle against India and this has become a question of life and death for our countrymen.

An Imperialist concept

While only a few years back the common people, both Hindus and Sikhs, made fun of the Khalistan concept, today, thanks to the communal approach of the Akali leaders, the narrow-mindedness of the Hindu communal leaders and the opportunist policy of the Congress Party, many people have come to believe that formation of Khalistan is inevitable.

The argument runs somewhat like this :

'Something which acquires a name, does inevitably come into being'. And further : 'It was said that Pakistan shall never come into being. But that became a reality. Then Pakistanis said they would never allow the formation of Bangladesh, that too came into being. Then some of our brave leaders said the Punjabi Suba could only be formed on their bodies. Those bodies are today alive and the Punjabi Suba is moving towards Khalistan.'

These views of the common people are increasingly becoming strong because of the murder of innocent Hindu brothers and of dissenting Sikhs at the hands of the Khalistan extremists, because of the uprooting of hundreds of Hindu families from the border areas, because of the threats being given to Sikhs in the rest of the country by the Hindu communal organisations and in many cases due to the helplessness of the administration. The effect of this phenomenon is becoming so powerful that an influential secular Sikh intellectual told me the other day at Chandigarh : "Now Khalistan is to come into being. I am selling my land in Haryana."

Also, I was extremely surprised when I was told that a well-known leader of a revolutionary Left party was of the view that "in the fight against extremists what is the use of getting our revolutionary cadres killed when Khalistan is to come into being—we shall fight for revolution in Khalistan".

In this context, a serious question arises : Whether in today's India or the world the establishment of Khalistan is possible ? Is this belief based on reality or does it arise from utter political ingnorance ?

Shall 'Khalistan' be formed ?

History is witness to the fact that a new state is born out of a country when the political structure of that country gets crumbled. After the First World War, many countries in Europe and West Asia (Finland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, the Baltic countries etc.) came into being at a time when the then big empires, that of the Czarist Russia, the Ottoman Turk and the Hapsburg Austria-Hungary, collapsed either as a result of war or of revolution. In 1947, Pakistan came into being because the then imperialist rulers of India were determined to form it and our nationai leaders wanted to avoid a civil war in order to prevent its formation. Bangladesh came into being because the whole people there revolted against the Pakistani government. India supported them with arm. Also Bangladesh was at a distance of 1,500 miles from the centre of the Pakistani power. The demand for the Punjabi Suba was realised because the principle of linguistic states had been implemented in the whole country much earlier and also because it was only another administrative division within the country and not a sovereign state outside it.

The efforts of the Khalistanis to establish Khalistan cannot be compared to any of these situations. Of course, India is facing many serious problems, Among these are poverty, corruption, aggression, exploitation, divisions based on language, religion and caste, and even riots. And in the

north-east, tribals there have been on revolt. The ruling party pursuing its interests, instead of solving the problems complicates them. The bourgeois parties of the opposition take opportunist positions and the Leftist parties are divided and their mass base is limited. In such a situation, all parties are rightly worried about the freedom and integrity of the country.

But this is only an incomplete picture of contemporary reality. If we look on the positive side then it becomes obvious that out of the two dozen countries around the Indian Ocean, India is the most powerful country. It is second in the world in terms of population. It is rich in natural resources. Today it is more united than ever before. The country is linked with transport and communication from one end to the other. As a result of capitalist development the country has become one unified market. In economic terms, a country which before 1947 could not make a knife or a needle is now producing modern machinery of great variety. It is the tenth in the world in industrial production. In science and technology India has the largest number of experts after the USA and the USSR.

The Indian army is the fourth largest in the world. Its air force is the fifth and the navy comes eighth in the world. An experienced and clever capitalist class controls state power, which will not accept a new division. The people of the country have a clear political consciousness and a hundred-year-old anti-imperialist national democratic movement as their precious tradition. Moreover, despite many weaknesses there is a strong Left movement whose potential is sufficiently strong. In this situation no separatist terrorism can defeat this strength of the Indian people. Those people who because of difficulties or because of ignorance believe that the Indian State shall collapse and Khalistan shall inevitably be established are living in a fool's paradise.

Decline of separatism

From this point of view, modern history presents a few examples also. Some of the Third World countries which were far weaker than India were faced with separatist revolts inspired and supported by imperialism. Such was the case of Biafara in Nigeria, Eritrea in Ethiopia and Kurdistan in Iraq. In these countries separatism was routed. In India too separatist extremism shall meet the same fate.

Another question posed is whether as a result of direct military intervention of Pakistan can the extremists succeed ? On the basis of balance of forces as it obtains today in the Indian sub-continent, it can be said that if Pakistan once again commits the grave error of attacking India, it will meet the same fate as it did in 1965 and 1971. As far as their more powerful patron the US is concerned, if as a result of its direct and indirect intervention it has not been able to subdue Libya, Syria, Angola and Nicaragua, then what progress can it make in regard to India ? Moreover, if the US in a fit of adventurism uses the RDF (Rapid Deployment Force), India can always rely on the decisive help of its tried friends, the socialist countries, particularly the Soviet Union.

Another question needs to be discussed. Some people ask whether the present extremism in Punjab can acquire the shape of a guerilla war ?

The answer to this question is also in the negative. Although as a result of religious inspiration and due to the help from Pakistan a few organised extremists can continue to perpetrate murders or decoities here and there, there cannot be any guerilla war in Punjab. For a successful guerilla war the unity of the broad mass of people, their active support and actual participation is required. This is the lesson from the liberation struggles of China, Vietnam and Algeria.

The political situation in Punjab is such that half of the Punjab population i.e, the Hindus and Harijan brothers, is strongly opposed to extremism since the extremists call them their Enemy No. 1. Leaving aside some areas of the border where

extremists have the support of a section of the Sikh masses, in the rest of Punjab the broad mass of Sikhs are opposed to murders, decoities and vandalism and they aspire for peace. In addition to this, the moderate Akalis, the Namdharis, the Radha Swamis, and the followers of the Nirankaris, besides supporters of the Congress and the communists among Sikhs are opposed to extremism. In such a situation there is no popular base for an extremist guerilla war in Punjab.

Moreover, a guerilla war can be fought only by oppressed masses of the people. In China, Vietnam or Algeria the great guerilla wars were fought against imperialism and feudalism for national liberation by the oppressed people. The Sikh extremists of Punjab are not opposed to imperialism, they are their stooges and they are not fighting for national liberation but are preparing for national enslavement. The Sikh masses of India have many a grouse against the Government of India just as the working people of other communities have, but to call the Indian Sikhs oppressed or slaves is totally baseless. In the political sphere Sikhs occupy many top posts. Despite the fact that their population is just 1.5 per cent, 8 per cent of the IAS officers are Sikhs. Among the Army officers 22 per cent are Sikhs, and in some of the technical services in the Defence their strength is as high as 45 per cent. In Punjab the Akali Dal has been able to come to power four times and if its governments fell before completing their terms, the main reason has been its inner differences. If the states have less rights then what they should have is not the problem of the Sikhs of Punjab alone, all the democratic parties are asking for more rights for the states.

The people in Punjab depend mainly on agriculture. Ninety per cent of land is with the Sikh peasants who own it. In the field of industry, the Ramgarhia or other Sikhs constitute an influential segment. Outside Punjab Sikhs own modern farms of varying size. In many parts of the country the business of 'dhabas', hotels, contractorship and transport is owned by Sikhs. In such a situation if it is said that out of all the minorities in the country Sikhs are the most successful and prospering then it is no exaggeration. The Sikh masses made a notable contribution to the freedom struggle and they

shall no doubt be ready to defend democratic values and their genuine rights but thay shall not follow the extremist forces of imperialism and support a guerilla war and thus bring destruction on themselves.

For the success of a guerilla war, geography also plays its part. Punjab is a plain area. There are no big jungles, nor any mountaineous terrain which could serve as a hideout of the guerillas. Not only the towns, even all the villages are connected with roads. The security forces of the state can reach any place within an hour or so. In this situation it is almost impossible for the extremist guerillas to keep any territory under their occupation.

In the end, it must be accepted that the US and Pakistan are no friend of the Sikh masses. They are only using a section of the Sikh masses and the misguided youth for their dirty political aims. A few years ago when the Kurds in Iraq revolted against their government, the CIA and the Shah of Iran had given financial assistance and weapons to the Kurds to destabilise the anti-imperialist Iraqi regime. But later when an agreement was reached between the Shah of Iran and the Iraqi government over the dispute over Shat-ul-Arlli, then the CIA and the Shah stopped this help to the Kurds, with the result that thousands of Kurds were butchered. Similarly, when the narrow political aims of the USA and Pakistan are achieved, they will also pull the rug from under the feet of these boosted extremists.

From this it is clear that there is no possibility of spreading a guerilla warfare in Punjab or of the estabilishment of Khalistan. But it is very necessary to take strong administrative measures as well as build broad unity and mobilise patriotic forces so as to defeat extremism. From the political standpoint, all the progressive forces must form the vanguared in taking these steps.

4. Sikhs in Western Countries and the Khalistani Bedlam— Some Impressions

India today is facing a more dangerous imperialist conspiracy. The freedom and unity achieved as a result of great sacrifices made by lakhs of patriots is in danger of being lost. Nearly one-and-a-half years ago, the then US Ambassador to the UN, Jean Kirkpatric, had submitted a plan for India's Balkanisation, before the leading representatives of the U.S. ruling classes; today we are witness to a separatist "Brahmaputra Plan" in the north-eastern region and a Khalistani conspiracy in the north-weastern region, being implemented. The Prime Minister of the country, Indira Gandhi, was murdered as a result of a conspiracy, and now the whole country knows that the State Department of the U.S. had got a study prepared by Professor Hardgrave two months before the tragedy to find out as to what would be the gain to the U.S. if Indira Gandhi died before or after the Indian General Elections. How impatient were these imperialists for the demise of Indira Gandhi.

Imperialist conspiracy

A most dirty political game is being played in Punjab for the last four or five years. In this, communal, separatist and

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extremist elements are the instruments of the imperialist conspiracy against India.

It is no secret now that a yet another conspiracy was hatched by the Khalistani terrorists living in the U.S. to assassinate Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The plan to blow up the Air India Boeing *Kanishka* was prepared in Canada. And now it is known that there are at least 25 training camps in the U.S. which impart training to terrorists, including Sikh terrorists, and these are in the knowledge and under the patronage of the U.S. Government.

This is the background in which religious sentiments of the 6.7 lakh Sikhs settled in the U.K., Canada and the U S. were excited, following Operation Bluestar, by imperialists and their puppets, Khalistanis, for their anti-Indian motives. It is a pity that the Government of India and the political parties here are not taking any effective steps to provide correct information and political attention to Sikhs settled in these foreign lands. As a result the anti-nationals have a free run of the situation.

A major role in misleading these Sikhs settled in the West is played by the newspapers, Radio and T.V. of the U.S., Canada and the U.K. They present every rift in the country in exaggerated form that it should appear as if the country was on the verge of breaking up into pieces, and that the formation of Khalistan was within the realm of possibilities.

There are about a dozen Sikh separatist organisations in these countries. The leaders of these organisations, who are otherwise non-entities, are under one pretext or the other put on the T.V. In Vancouver City, a sixty-year-old Manmohan Singh calls himself President of the Sikh Students Federation. In May 1985, he was shown on the T.V. and asked in which standard he was studying. His reply was : "I study Guru Granth Sahib".

The undue publicity and importance given to such wealthy Sikhs—Jagjit Singh Chauhan, Ganga Singh Dhillon and Didar Singh Bans—is well known. Some time back, a sub-committee of the U.S. Senate invited Chauhan to visit Washington as an "agricultural expert" even though he did not possess an Indian

passport. This, and the invitation by the prestigious National Press Club to Ganga Singh Dhillon for a special talk just a day before the arrival of Rajiv Gandhi in Washington and the letter sent by 18 Congressmen to the Indian Ambassador in Washington about the alleged "atrocities" on the Sikhs, were steps which aggravated the situation further and antagonised the immigrant Sikhs all the more. These were well-planned moves to provide credibility to the Khalistani leaders who otherwise were non-entities.

Misuse of the Gurdwaras

There are a large number of Gurdwaras in the UK, Canada and the U.S. These were built by the entire Sikh congregation in these countries. Till just about four years back, in the committees running their administration there were represented all shades of political opinion. But in recent time, the upper wing of Sikh fundamentalism, the Khalistani elements, has succeeded in throwing out all moderate and patriotic Sikhs from these committees. In some places like Vancouver, Southall and Coventry, in order to capture and establish their control over the Gurdwaras the Khalistanis have resorted to even physical assaults.

Among the Sikhs of these Western countries secular, political and social organisations have a limited influence. As a rusult, the Gurdwaras alone are the centres of religious, political and social activity. In this situation the Khalistani extremists use the financial resources and the platforms of these Gurdwaras for anti-national purposes without any qualms of conscience. If ever, an enlightened Sikh gave an expression to his patriotic feelings and talked soberly about the situation, he was hounded out as a "Government Agent" by these Khalistanis.

An intelligent retired Sikh officer told me what happened in his case. He narrated that when he told a certain Sikh congregation that Sikhs should avoid armed clashes with the

government in Punjab since they could not face the might of the Government of India and they should find a political solution of the crisis, organisers called him a "traitor" and got ready to assault him.

Through the offerings of the devotees and through special appeals, unprecedented collections are made for the Khalistani cause. There have been cases of embezzlement and about a dozen Khalistani organisations are fighting among themselves over the issue of the control of these funds In Vancouver, it is openly talked about that Talwinder Singh, a Khalistani leader, who calls himself a "living martyr", has built for himself two palatial houses and owns two very costly cars.

But the Khalistanis have not been so lucky everywhere. Leaving aside a few places, nowhere the Khalistanis have been able to establish their control over the Gurdwaras owned by the Ramgarhias, Addharmis, Ghanwars and other Sikh communities. Wherever, the patriotic elements have united, the Khalistanis have failed in establishing their control over the Gurdwaras.

Creating terror

In order to silence patriotic Sikhs outside the Gurdwaras, the Khalistani extremists resort to terror. About a year back, these extremists had blown up the office of the pro-Congress paper, *Sandesh*, with a bomb. This resulted in the death of Kartar Singh, a widely respected Principal of the College at Banga (in Jalandhar District). During the same period these people organised an assault on a reception held for the editor of *Tribune* at the Maharaja Hotel in Southall. There have been many cases of burning of the Indian National Flag, and attacks on missions and consulates in London and Vancouver.

In the beginning of 1985 Ujjal Singh Dosaijh, Advocate, Punjabi poet Comrade Gurcharan Rampuri, and an old nationalist Karam Singh Banga, were attacked in Vancouver.

The Canadian authorities are so favourably disposed towards the extremists that till May not a single person had been charged for this act. In 1984, on August 15, when an Independence Day ceremony was to be held in the Indian Consulate in Vancauver, the Khalistanis attacked the plaee. The Canadian police instead of providing protection to Consul-General Sharma, requested him to abandon the ceremony. Sharma, however, at great personal risk, refused to oblige.

Role of Political Parties

The Indian National Coagress has its branchesin Canada, the US and the UK which function in the name of the Overseas Congress. There are some people in this Congress who are wedded to the nationalist ideology, but a larger number of them are those who have aligned themselves with the Congress for personal gain or for just to seek a position of patronage. During this crisis, only the Congressmen of Birmingham or of Southall have to some extent stood up against the extremists; most of others who have rather big names have stood aloof.

There is a large section of people, both in the UK and Canada, which stands with the ideology of the Left. All these people except for one group, are opposed to the Khalistani extremists. But they are divided in many groups. The largest among them is aligned with the CPI (M). The activity of this group is much restricted as compared to its organised strength. One reason for this dilemma possibly is the close connection that this party has been having with the Akalis and that it has always regarded the Congress Party as having been mainly responsible for every majar negative development in Punjab. That might be the reason why Gurnam Singh Sanghera, who is the main leader of the party in Canada, was in the forefront of the demonstration in Vancouver staged by the Khalistanis following Operation Bluestar in June, 1984.

In Britain and Canada, there is no organisation of the CPI, but many of its sympathisers in the UK are active under the leadership of Comrade Vishnu Datt. In collaboration with other progressive elements they bring out a monthly, named, *Charcha* which has fought against the Khalistanis.

The Naxalities have many groups in the UK and Canada. Among these, Comrade Iqbal Bran's group in London and Professor Sharma's IPANA in Vancouver are very active against the Khalistani bedlam.

Friends of the CIA

Out of the Naxalite groups, the Ghadar Communist Party of Hardyal Singh Bains in Canada fully cooperates with the Khalistanis. Its supporters say openly that their aims and those of the Khalistanis are the same, because both believe in an armed struggle against the Government of India. It is also said that this party has entered into an agreement with Jagjit Singh Chauhan that the two shall conduct armed struggle in Punjab in cooperation with one another and that the areas "liberated" through the exertion of Chauhan shall have a saffron flag of Khalistan and the areas liberated by the Ghadar Communist Party of Bains shall have a red flag.

The entire segment of progressive patriots among the Indians in Canada is of the view that both these groups work under CIA's patronage. In March last the public meeting organised by many organisations of Vancouver to protest against the attack on Ujjal Singh Dosaijh was sought to be disrupted by a joint attack of Khalistanis and the Naxalite groups of Bains.

Even though the Khalistani miscreants in the UK, Canada and the US continue to create disturbances and resort to terrorist actions, and in spite of their activities getting exaggerated publicity in the papers, in reality they do not command support of more than 10 to 15 per cent of the Sikhs in these

countries. After Operation Bluestar an overwhelming majority of Sikhs got greatly disturbed emotionally and got confused politically. The extremists taking advantage of this situation try to show that the entire Sikh community is with them. I have met dozens of Sikhs individually and in groups. My experience is that whenever all the facts of the imperialist communal conspiracy are laid bare before them their reaction is healthy and patriotic. If a majority of Sikhs living in the West are confused it is also a fact that about 25 per cent of these people are with the Leftist political parties. But due to lack of unity among the Leftist groups and also due to lack of activity, the field remains open to be captured by the Khalistanis.

In this situation if the Leftist democratic and secular forces jointly make attempts then these Sikhs living in the Western countries can be won over and the Khalistani offensive can be defeated decisively. The only question is whether the patriotic parties and forces shall pay attention to this matter? These communalists are strong because the field has been left open for them to do what they like and they are being encouraged by the rulers of the Western countries. They earn a lot and live in luxury in these countries. Except for a few, none of them shall be prepared to give up this life of luxury and come back and settle in India. By joining this bedlam in the Western countries they gain cheap popularity and it involves no risk to them. They are paper tigers and their main aim is to set fire to Punjab and while living in the US, the UK and Canada to make the maximum of it for themselves.

5. The Indian Freedom Movement and The Ghadar Party

Our freedom movement is our priceless heritage. No doubt the Indian National Congress played a decisive role in the movement but it was not the only party in the battle. There were other patriotic organisations as well. For example, the terrorist movement of Bengal, the Ghadar Party, the Gurdwara Reform movement led by the Akalis, Shaheed Bhagat Singh's Hindustan Socialist Republican Party, the Peasants and Workers movement, the Communist movement, and the forces behind the INA and RIN mutinies of 1946 were many such segments of the Independence movement that had played no less important a role. But whenever there is a talk about it, the ruling Congress Party tends to ignore these militant movements with the result the younger generation is kept ignorant about them. In this regard, the Ghadar Party stands on a higher pedestal. No Indian patriot worth his salt can ignore this fact. All of us are proud of it.

Ignoble Conditions of Indians

The Ghadar Party was founded in 1913 mainly by those Sikh peasant immigrants who had settled in the United States and on the Western Coast of Canada. Both in the United States and Canada, they had to bear with unheard of hardships. The White residents of these countries hated them because of racial antagonism. The Indians were jeered

at as slaves and mean people. At some places these chauvinists even made physical assaults on these immigrants.

In the free and democratic atmosphere of the United States and Canada these immigrants soon realised that their plight and degradation was mainly due to India's slavery under British Imperialism. In order to protect their self-respect and their rights, they formed an organisation known as the Indian Association of the Pacific Coast which later came to be known as the Ghadar Party.

Lala Hardyal played a leading role in founding the Ghadar Party and giving it a political direction. Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, Bhai Bhagwan Singh, Baba Kesar Singh Thathgarh, Pandit Kanshi Ram, Rehmat Ali, V.G. Pingley, Bhai Santokh Singh, Kartar Singh Sarabha, Baba Jwala Singh Thathian and Baba Harnam Singh Tundilat were other founding members of the party.

It was the time when the level of political consciousness of the Indian people was very low. Though a strong protest movement against the partition of Bengal had been there, the influence of the Congress Party was by and large confined to the urban middle class. Mahatma Gandhi had yet not returned from South Africa and he had still many illusions about the sense of justice of British Imperialism. In short, neither any party nor any individual even talked about India's complete independence.

After the Mutiny of 1857, the Ghadar Party was the first party which, even 17 years earlier than the Lahore Resolution of the Congress for complete independence, had declared complete independence as its objective and that it was to be achieved through an armed struggle against British Imperialism. After achieving independence, the Ghadar Party wanted to establish a secular and democratic state in India. According to the rules and regulations of the party, "every lover of freedom, irrespective of caste and creed, was welcome to its fold." The party was out and out a secular party. The regulations provided that "inter-relations between the members of the Ghadar Party would not be religious but national and any discussion on

religious matters is prohibited." The Ghadar Party was wedded to internationalism and had fraternal relations with people such as the Irish and the Russian patriots who were struggling for their emancipation. There were standing instructions to the members of the Ghadar Party to help all those people who were struggling for their freedom. Every member of the party was duty bound to make every type of sacrifice.

National Integration

The leaders and workers of the Ghadar Party fully adhered to these principles. The Sikh, the Hindu and the Muslim Ghadar patriots created an unprecedented unity in their party. Whereas the first president of the party happened to be Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna and the second Bhai Bhagwan Singh, Lala Hardyal was its first general secretary and Mohammad Barkat Ullah the first vice-president. Kanshi Ram was the cashier. Chaudhari Mangu Ram, a scheduled caste of Mangoowal village of Hoshiarpur district, was one of the party leaders.

The prominent leaders of the party donated their entire property to the organisation. In the central office of the party, housed in Yuganter Ashram in the city of San Francisco, about twenty Ghadar revolutionaries worked as whole-timers. No wages were paid. There was a common kitchen in the office and each member was paid only two dollars as pocket money per month.

Apart from other literature, the party used to bring out a monthly, *Ghadar*, in four languages, namely, Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, and Gujrati. This monthly was sent free to thousands of people living in India, China, Philippines, Hongkong, Malaya Panama and Argentina. For the expenses, the party used to raise funds from members and sympathisers.

Within a year of the founding of the party, the First World War broke out between Britain and Germany. The Ghadarite leaders took it as an auspicious occasion for India's freedom

struggle. With this aim in view, hundreds of Ghadarites, prepared for supreme sacrifice, left for India to promate a rebellion. For this, their main stake was to prepare the Army for mutiny and mobilise behind them the peasants and the students. The measure of the self-sacrificing spirit of these revolutionary patriots can be gauged from the following appeal printed as the front-piece of the *Ghadar* newspaper :

Wanted, wanted, wanted,
For creating Mutiny in India,
Soldiers;
Salary—death
Prize—Martyrdom
Pension—Freedom
Battlefront—India.

Towards A Mutiny

After reaching India, these Ghadarites did not rush to meet their families whom they had left many years before. Soon after their arrival, they contacted revolutionaries of Bengal, went underground and fanned out to the rural areas and the cantonments of Northern India. They established their headquarters, first at Amritsar, and then at Lahore. These brave revolutionaries worked so hard that within a few months, they were able to persuade a considerable section of the Army to stage a mutiny in the cantonments of Shanghai, Hongkong, Singapore, Pinang, Dhaka, Dinajpur, Lucknow, Allahabad, Banaras, Agra, Lahore, Ferozepore, Meerut, Jalandhar, Bannu, Kohat, Hoti Mardan, Peshawar, Delhi, Mungher and Ajmer. (Sachindra Sanyal, a leader from Bengal of this movement, in his *Jail Life* writes : "From the North-West Frontier to Dinajpur, there was not even a single cantonment left uncovered. Almost all the platoons assured to join the revolutionaries once they started the rebellion."

The Rawlett Act report says : "It is clear that in Punjab, the Ghadar Movement missed a bloody upheaval narrowly."

The Ghadarites fixed February 19, 1915, to be the day for the rebellion. The Lahore and Ferozepore platoons were to take the initiative. But the organisation of the Ghadarites had shortcomings. Because of this, one renegade, named Kirpal Singh, who was able to penetrate into the central organisation, leaked out the whole plan to the British Government. The Ghadarites smelt this treachery and advanced the date to February 17. But most of the leaders were arrested before this date during police raids and the whole plan fell flat. In spite of that some platoons in certain places, like Singapore, rebelled.

After the failure of the movement, several Ghadarites were arrested under the Defence of India Act; sixteen cases in India and four in foreign countries were launched against them. The accused had no right to appeal in these cases. In the 291 cases in which the Ghadarites were proceeded against, 42 of them were given capital punishment, 114 were sentenced for life and deported to the Andaman Islands, and 93 imprisoned for shorter terms. Those who were sent to the gallows included Kartar Singh Sarabha, V.G. Pingley, Bhai Balwant Singh Canadian, Hafiz Abdulla, Harnam Singh Lahri, Murtza Hussain and Jagat Singh of Sur Singh. Those patriots who were given life imprisonment and were deported to the Andaman included Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, Baba Gurmukh Singh Lalton, Baba Prithvi Singh Lalroo, Baba Jwala Singh Thathian, Baba Kesar Singh Thathgarh, Baba Roop Singh Chuharchak and Sant Wasakha Singh Dadder. Twelve Jawans of the 13th Cavalry of the Indian Army were hanged, while six were ordered to serve life imprisonment in the Andaman Islands. Later on, the American Government launched a case against nine patriots in San Francisco and all of them were sentenced to imprisonment varying from three to nine months.

The patriots faced intolerable tortures in the British jails. They were given substandard and dirty food Their total diet consisted of 10 ounces of wheat flour, some rotten vegetable and some common salt. They had to do hard fatigue. They were yoked to run cattle oil mills, cattle flour-mills and drive Persian Wheels like animals. A prisoner was given 18 kg.

of wheat to grind or to squeeze out 10 kg. of oil. They were cane-charged on the slightest violation of the jail rules. The patriots were given solitary confinement. Against these atrocities, they went on hunger strike several times.

Unprecedented Patriotism

After undergoing such unbearable tortures and life imprisonments, when these partiots came out of the jails they did not go to their homes for rest. So staunch was their patriotism, so irrepressible was their yearning for freedom, that they again plunged into the freedom struggle. They got a new inspiration from the Soviet Revolution of 1917 and most of them joined the communist movement.

In 1925-26 Bhai Santokh Singh founded the Labour Party and started a monthly, popularly known as *Kirti*. Baba Jwala Singh laid the foundation of the peasant organisation in Punjab. Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, Baba Gurmukh Singh Lalton, Baba Prithvi Singh, Baba Roop Singh Chuharchak, Nidhan Singh Mahesari, Baba Bhag Singh Canadian and Baba Karam Singh Cheema played a prominent role not only in the independence movement but also in the Communist Party. During 1942-45 almost all of them were put behind bars by the British Government. Many of them were also detained without trial between 1948 and 1952 by the Congress Government.

These patriots bore all this with a smiling face and continued to defend the freedom and integrity of the motherland.

This is the story of those valiant fighters of which every Punjabi, every Indian, should rightly be proud of.

6. The Heroism of the People of Kot Fatoohi

Kot Fatoohi is a small town situated on the Phagwara-Mahilpur road in Hoshiarpur district. It is at the centre of a highly productive area on the border of Hoshiarpur and Jalandhar districts. It is at the junction of roads linking five towns—Mahilpur, Garhshanker, Adampur, Banga and Phagwara. It is here that the Bari-Doab Canal crosses the Phagwara-Mahilpur road. Its bazar is flourishing. There is a branch of the Punjab National Bank here, and an office of the state electricity department. A police post is situated in the very centre of the bazar wherein are posted one sub-inspector, one havaldar, four constables and two wireless operators. Situated at a distance of about one kilometre from the bazar where there is a bus-stand and towards the south, just opposite village Kotla, there is a Central Reserved Police Force (CRPF) post where a number of jawans with weapons are on duty.

There has been generally peace in the area and the people have maintained brotherhood. But there have been a few terrorist attacks also during the last two or three years. In 1984 an unsuccessful attempt was made to loot the bank at village Paldi. Later an attempt was made at a wine-contractor's shop. A few months back the extremists set fire to the petrol pump there which resulted in the burning alive of a youngman.

Nawan Zamana, 21 August, 1985.

The latest attack by the terrorists took place on the morning of August 14, 1985. Even though the bank starts business at 10 a.m. the bank manager and some other employees had reached the bank premises at 9 a.m. and were busy supervising the usual cleaning. Meanwhile at around 10 minutes past 9 a.m. one person of about 30 years of age followed by another youngman of about 24-25 years entered the bank building. The first one was about 5ft. in height and the second about 5ft. 4 inches. These details came to light later. Both came on a Hero-Honda motor cycle which they had parked to the south of the bank under the cover of bricks which had been piled up there for constructing a bridge on the canal.

The first terrorist went straight towards the manager's seat and aiming his pistol at him demanded the entire cash of the bank. The Manager thought it to be a joke and asked, "What is the drama brother, the bank is yet to open". In the meanwhile the other terrorist aiming his pistol had also entered the bank. While the first one again threatened the Manager, peon Malkiat Singh Dhami caught hold of him and held him in his embrace from behind. The other terrorist shot the guard Surinder Kumar Khanna as a result of which he died. The second terrorist moved ahead to help his accomplice who had been caught. He fired thrice on Malkiat Singh Dhami as a result of which he was injured seriously. The other employees of the bank who were present at the time and a local fertilizer dealer Khairati Lal, who had come to the bank on business, were able to hid themselves in a room in the building.

Heroism of the People

As a result of the firing of shots which were heard in the neighbourhood there was great commotion in the shops situated close to the bank. The terrorists took to their heels. One of them fired from his pistol while running

towards his motor cycle. At a distance of some 60-70 yards, on the other side of the road, there is a shop of tyres and tubes belonging to Jathedar Swaran Singh who belongs to Kot Fatoohi. He was sitting outside the shop reading a newspaper. Having heard the shots he got alert and when the first terrorist came out of the bank, he followed him. From the otherside of the bank, people raised an alarm calling : "Get hold of them, they are dacoits". The terrorist again fired the shots. These bullets hit the brick pile. People were not afraid and there were about 30-35 persons who were challenging the terrorist. Jathedar Swaran Singh reached the terrorist and gave him a blow. The terrorist stumbled. At this moment another shopkeeper Gurdial Singh Panjova was also with Jathedar Swaran Singh.

Meanwhile, the second terrorist who came out of the bank also quietly joined the crowd and himself started shouting "Get hold of them". This enabled him to conceal his identity. The first terrorist fired back on the crowd but none was injured. People retreated a bit so that they were not to be hurt with pistol shots. They started pelting stones on the fleeing terrorists. This went on for a few minutes. The terrorists had by this time reached their motor cycle. They tried to start it but could not for some time.

Some of the people meanwhile reached the police post in the bazar which is about two to three hundred yards away. At that time there was only one constable and one wireless operator there. The rest of the staff was absent, It had been mentioned that the sub-inspector incharge of the post had gone to the CRPF post. But some people asserted that he had actually gone to attend on a certain political leader. The rest of the staff of the police post consisting of one havaldar and three constables had been seen moving in a CRPF jeep along the canal towards village Ispur around 8.30 a.m. Earlier, at around 6.00 a.m. some members of this staff had arrested one poppy smuggler of the village. This second visit of the police to the village was probably meant to arrest some accomplices of the one arrested already. Be that as it may, the police post at the time the terrorists hit was empty

of the staff except two persons i.e. one constable and a wireless operator.

The people who reached the post demanded of the staff : "We have surrounded the extremists. They have pistols. We are unarmed. People have been killed in the bank. Please come to our help."

The policeman replied : "I am alone here. There is no weapon here. I cannot do anything".

The people demanded of the wireless operator : "Please send wireless messages to Banga, Mahilpur and the Garhshanker police stations, so that 'nakabandi' can be set up. Then the terrorists shall not be able to escape". The reply of the wireless operator was something like this : "Only if the bank people come here and make a written complaint can I send the wireless message".

Some people had reached the CRPF post but they did not have any transport, since the jeep had gone after the poppy smugglers.

Thus the brave people of Kot Fatoohi endangered their lives and unarmed faced the bullets showered by the torrorists while our security services who are supposed to be protecting the people, were either moving from one place to another and were without weapons or were hiding themselves or were demanding a written complaint for the purpose of a First Information Report.

Gurn el Singh who is a shopkeeper is also the president of the local committee. He is an intelligent person and a gentleman. When he found that the police had not gone into action he went to the post around 9.30 a.m. and repeatedly requested the wireless operator to send messages for reinforcement. This proved effective and at about 9.50 a.m. the Mahilpur SHO reached Kot Fatoohi. The local sub-inspector arrived there even later. Some time after this the police from Banga and Garhshanker also reached there. But now it was too late. Despite the CRPF and police posts in the town itself, their movement started one hour late. Long before this the terrorists were able to escape on their motor cycle taking the road along the canal towards

Garhshanker and Banga. They were followed by people on cycles for about two kilometres. But in the absence of any weapons it was of no avail.

Everything was over now. And the police became active. Jeeps were running around, enquiries were being made and 'nakabandis' were being set up.

One death, serious injury to one and the total inactivity and inefficiency of the police made the people at once deeply sad and highly agitated. Apart from the people in the bazar, those belonging to nearby villages also started gathering in the town. The bazar observed a hartal. Around 2,000 people staged an angry demonstration against the police. The police post was 'gheraoed' and traffic on the main road was blocked. This was the situation from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The main slogans that the people raised were :

"Punjab Police, Murdabad".

"Close the Police Post".

Around 11 a.m. SSP Jain also arrived along with his staff and policemen. The enraged people stopped his car and refused to allow him to proceed towards Phagwara side. SP Mann talked to the representatives of the people. The people told him that the police post at Kot Fatoohi was useless. "No one present on duty. Whosoever there are, have no weapons. These people cannot provide any security to us. They are partners in the smuggling and their main job appears to be to catch hold of petty criminals or even innocent people and fleece them for bribes. This post be abolished. If you don't want to do this then take disciplinary action against them and transfer them from here". Mann handed over the matter to the D.S.P. Later the D.S.P. promised the representatives of the people that he would transfer the staff but that the sub-inspector should stay. Perhaps he thought that immediate transfer of the sub-inspector would be "lowering the prestige" of the police.

People Ask

With one death and grievous injuries to one person and with the bitter experience of police functioning, the people of Kot Fatoohi are in a fighting spirit. They are angry with the police. But they are not afraid of the terrorists. There is no rift among them on Hindu-Sikh lines. And they ask again and again :

(*i*) Why there is no permanent post of the CRPF in the bazar of Kot Fatoohi which is a big road junction ?

(*ii*) Why the local sub-inspector and policemen were all absent from the scene at the same time ? On what mission had they gone ?

(*iii*) Why were there not enough weapons at the police post and what is the purpose of the post without weapons ? When the attack by terrorists had been reported to them, why the wireless message was not sent at once ? Why was the CRPF jeep parked at a distance and what was the mission on which it had been sent away ?

(*iv*) Why has the promise regarding transferring the staff made to the people not been fulfilled ?

These are the questions which need to be investigated by the Punjab Government, so that it can command the confidence of the people. But will the Government perform its duty ?

TRIBUTES
To
DARSHAN SINGH
CANADIAN

7. The Tragedy of Punjab

AVTAR SINGH MALHOTRA

This book commemorates a martyr, Com. Darshan Singh Canadian, who was an eminent soldier of the Communist Party of India. Com. Canadian fell to the blood lust of separatist terrorists who are out to disrupt the traditional brotherly relations between Hindus and Sikhs and to help the designs of those who plot to balkanise India. Com. Canadian held aloft the banner of his party, the banner of communal amity and nationai integrity. He lived a life dedicated to the cause of national and social liberation of Indian people and laid down his life for defending the unity and freedom of India and its people, for he saw in it the pre-condition for their social liberation.

A red flag atop a tree marks the spot near his village where he fell. Fifteen of his comrades had already coloured the earth red. Red flags fluttered on their pyres, defying the killers. No one knows how many more will join them. The innocent blood of hundreds of other unsuspecting fellow-citizens has also already coloured this soil. They fell because they happened to be shaven, or they held views opposing the killers' aims or performed their public duties conscientiously and thereby were put on the infamous "hit lists". In the ninth decade of the twentieth century has emerged this replica of the executors of thc medieval Spanish Inquisition. The fire of fanaticism devours all in its path—only the living count the loss to humanity, the capacities and talents of the victims. Com. Canadian, a talented agitator and propagandist, a dedicated, popular mass leader faced this fanaticism

undaunted. We mourn his loss but this loss also high lights the crime of the fanatics. Such losses show their anti-human essence and will serve to hasten their doom

Is can be said with confidence that their cause is doomed. Their bullets cannot silence the increasing voices that answer their challenge with full-throated slogans :

"*Na Hindu Raj Na Khalistan, jug jug jeewe Hindustan*", "He who makes Hindu-Sikh fight is the enemy of the country" and "Down with extremism and separatism". Such heinous crimes serve to rouse the people's conscience and inspire many more to follow the path of the fallen and to rally the masses of all faiths and views to jointly curb this monster of communal hatred and disruption. What is urgently called for is a mighty mass movement against the forces of extremism against this cult of communal violence and for communal harmony and national unity. Let the martyrs' sacrifices inspire the mourners to organise such a mass movement.

It is necessary to dispel this wrong impression which is gaining ground in other states that all Sikhs have become Khalistanis and that they are killing Hindus and driving them out of Punjab. This is as irrational and misconceived as the ideas propagated by some extremists in Punjab that all Hindus have become proponents of 'Hindu Raj' that they want to absorb them in Hindu society, and that the 'Hindu Samraj' in Delhi is out to exterminate Sikhs.

It can be asserted categorically that despite the recent spread of extremist and anti-Centre views a vast majority of Sikhs not only in other states, but also in Punjab are opposed to Khalistan. Still broader is the opposition to the senseless killings and bloodshed. Despite repeated and persistent provocations and incitements the common Hindus and Sikhs have not clashed but have preserved their traditional bonds. It is not mainly due to joint Hindu-Sikh families which are mainly confined to some castes like *Khatris, Aroras, Kamboj* etc. This system is not prevalent among the peasants who live mostly in villages where Hindus form a tiny minority. But there have been no Hindu-Sikh clashes in Punjab, no riots, no attacks by the majority on the minority anywhere. All

the killings are done by some organised groups of terrorists of which Ribeiro's staff has prepared lists categoriwise. And they do not kill Hindus alone.

Here are some facts :

Of all those killed by the terrorists about one-third are Sikhs, most of them with beard. Of the six journalists killed, three are Sikhs and three Hindus ; of the 16 C.P.I. workers killed, seven are Sikhs. Recently the terrorists have concentrated on killing those whom they consider informers and such policemen who conscientiously perform their duties. Most of them are Sikhs. They include a lady Akali-worker, and the only son of a S.P. They also include a whole family of six, with three children, a woman and an old man.

Thus it is clear that they kill all those who oppose them, while their major targets are members of the minority community. Their clear aim is to provoke Hindu-Sikh clashes in Punjab, retaliation against Sikhs outside Punjab, and a chain of violence and riots leading to exchange of population. This, they think, would pave the way for 'Khalistan'.

The question is, will all this lead to 'Khalistan' ? Is 'Khalistan' achievable ?

'Khalistan' can only be achieved if India disintegrates and aome superior foreign power helps in its formation. Neither would India disintegrate nor shall any foreign power resort to military action to help formatiom of 'Khalistan'. The secular and democratic forces within India are strong enough to frustrate all those interested in, or working for, its disintegration. The lessons of its conquest, long enslavement and ruthless exploitation is there for the Indian people to see. They know that the unity of India must be preserved at all costs. Moreover we are not living in the 18th century, when the fate of any country could be shaped in isolation, or some foreign powers could play with its destiny or make its territory a battleground.

No foreign power can in the present world situation resort to armed action in support of the 'Khalistan'. Pakistan would crumble like a house of cards if it dared to do so. Militarily, Pakistan is no match for India, despite all the U.S. hardware that it gets in ever increasing quantities. It is riven by internal contradictions ; the Balochis, the Sindhis, and the Pakhtoons are in a rebellious mood. Dissatisfaction is mounting and the forces of democracy are getting more and more restive to usher a democratic order. In present-day conditions, neither the U.S.A. nor China can or will directly intervene in favour of the Pak military dictatorship. They would find it counter productive.

Can 'Khalistan' terrorists form a liberation force and go forward to achieve a sovereign theocratic state, such as visualised by Chauhan or Bhindranwale ? It is well known that an overwhelming majority of people in Punjab opposes the terrorists. Majority of Sikhs themselves are opposed to secession and terrorism, while Sikhs living outside Punjab would give anything for peace in Punjab. This divisive, seditious and sadistic movement of extremists evokes more and more opposition. In spite of this, it is not properly appreciated that the people and the healthy secular political forces have frustrated the ugly designs of terrorists during the last five or six years. Despite some cleavage, lay Sikhs and Hindus have preserved their traditional bonds in Punjab. In the days following the 'Operation Bluestar', despite the extermist calls and the tape-recorded exhortations of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, there were no killings of Hindus in the Punjab villages.

After Mrs. Indira Gandhi's assassination and rioting in Delhi, Bihar, Kanpur and at some other places, thousands of uprooted Sikh families came to Punjab, and efforts were made to inflame Sikh sentiments. Yet, there was no flare-up in the Punjab countryside as expected by the extremists. Army deployment alone could not ensure this in over 12,000 villages. Stories from other states of Hindus giving shelter to Sikhs in danger, and of Hindus and Sikhs together preserving peace or

keeping off riotous mobs, contributed to this, as also the healthy sentiments of the common people and their traditional close relations.

The terrorists are deliberately killing defenceless, ordinary Hindus in increasing numbers to unleash mass anti-Sikh riots in other states. But this has so far not taken place. Large sections of our people understand their game, and refuse to fall prey to it.

All this is not to spread complacency or to minimise the harm done by the terrorist violence and the possible disastrous consequences of their misdeeds, but to point out the silver lining on the dark clouds which many do not see. Ignoring this positive side however thin it may be at present is to give way to despair or even worse. And this thinking is neither patriotic nor objective.

One of the undoubted designs of anti-India forces has been to damage Punjab's economy, for it is a major supplier of surplus grain to the country, which was once dependent on P.L. 480. But this design has only partially succeeded, in the sense that only the industry and trade have been badly hit, but agriculture continues to have record crops, as the figures show This make it clear that production has been going on undisturbed in the countryside. It also confirms that the common people there continue to live and work in peace and amity.

The significance of this would be seen when it is kept in view that lakhs of migrant labourers from UP and Bihar work in Punjab's agriculture (as in its industry). I majority of the Punjab villages. Sikh peasants form the majority of the village popnlation. Does this confirm the view, propagated by some, that in Punjab all Sikhs have become 'Khalistanis' at heart, that Sikhs are killing Hindus and that a mass exodus of the minority is going on ? Does this show a picture of a peasantry running amuck and falling prey to religious revivalism and fundamentalism, devastating the towns and villages of Punjab and holding the country to ransom ?

Likewise the misguided and disruptive is the propaganda of the extremists about Hindu and 'Hindu imperialism' having evil design on Sikhs who are held as "second class citizens"

in India. Despite all sorts of *Senas* and *Dals* and the calls for a 'Hindu Republic" in India. these neither dominate the Indian state nor the Hindu community. Vast forces oppose them actively and are moving in defence of our secular democracy, which is one of the most valuable assests of independent India. Of course, it has serious shortcomings and these need urgently to be overcome. But extremist and secessionist propaganda is not the way to do so. On the contrary minority communalism aids and feeds majority oommunalism and vice-versa.

The propaganda about Sikhs being second class citizens is beseless. Whether it is agriculture or trade, army or services, other professions or skilled labour, the Sikhs are found ahead of others. They cannot complain of any discrimination or privations and with their qualities of enterprise and dynamism they have made valuable contribution in most fields of our society. What they can justifiably complain of is the recent disrepute and bad name for which partly the terrorists and separatists are responsible and partly their counterparts among the Hindu communal chauvinists and extremists who organise witch-hunts against the community.

Sikhs have made big sacrifices in the cause of national freedom and this earned them an honoured place in the society until the separatist terrorists tarnished that bright image. What was won by Sikh patriots fighting heroically and selflessly against Imperialism and for national emancipation, is being jeopardised by a few, shedding innocent blood furthering national disintegration and promoting the sinister designs of imperialism. The harm such elements are doing to the Sikhs, to Punjab and to India as a whole must not be underestimated.

Those who give the statistics of the killings and other voilent crimes, comparing them with some other states, fail to recognise in what precisely lies the tragedy of Punjab. Likewise the proponents of revenge and retaliation fail to see the real malady. Punjab has suffered through the ages, trampled underfoot by hordes of invaders, devastated and uprooted, its

people fighting and resettling, often absorbing those very tribes and invaders who ravaged their land. Sufferings and deaths, even in hundreds and thousands, are not new to them. But the killings today are literally fratricidal, most ugly and barbaric. The killers are not an external, alien force, but the flesh and blood of Punjab's humanity, even the very kith and kin of those being killed. Herein lies the agony of Punjab. It is an evil that is eating into the very vitals of the spiritual faith and heritage of the Punjabis, tearing to shreds their common life and culture. It is a contamination that is spreading and eating into the very soul of the Indian nation.

Thus, Punjab's tragedy lies in that Punjabis suffer not at the hands of an alien enemy but by the assault of the fellow countrymen carrying out the assignments of Zia and his imperialist masters. The killer-youth swears by the Khalsa created by the 10th Guru to fight religious oppression and tyranny; shouts of 'Raj Karega Khalsa' over the bodies of the defenceless victims of its bloody orgies—victims including even oldmen, women and children—forgetting that 'Raj Karega Khalsa' was a slogan of defiance of tyrants and a challenge to the oppressors, not a shout of triumph over helpless and innocent victims of terror.

The killers swear by the Sikh Gurus, the great apostles of religious tolerance and universal brotherhood. They preach their cult of sectarian fanaticism, hatred and violence from premises where the *ardas*, daily prayer, calls for universal peace and welfare. Symbolic of this tragedy of Punjab is the fact that whereas Guru Arjan Dev, the founder of Darbar Sahib at Amritsar, gave it four doors opening in four different directions offering welcome to all without any discrimination of caste or creed, the present occupant-usurpers have virtually closed them for all, except the extremist and their supporters.

In recent months the Punjab crisis has deepened further with the increase and expansion of the terrorist activities and the widening of their extremist base. Communal polarisation has further sharpened and both Sikh and Hindu communal-extremist organisations and groups have become more active and aggressive. Despite all the parleys on the diplomatic

level there is no let-up in the hostile anti-India activities of the Pak military dictatorship and its patrons. These include the running of training camps, smuggling of arms and infiltration of trained, Khalistani' terrorists. The trail of blood and tears is lengthening.

In this grave situation voices calling for President's rule and diployment of the army for civil administration, are getting more vociferous, completely foregetting that these remedies were tried and only subsequently was the Punjab accord signed. Both the ruling parties at the Centre and in the state—the Congress (I) and the Akali Dal (Longowal)—also seem to be moving towards a confrontation.

The socio-economic set-up in Punjab and the present correlation of political and class forces is such that a confrontation between the Congress and the Akali Dal leads to the deeping of the communal and caste cleavage. In the present condition it increases communal tensions and creates favourable ground for extremism. It makes it still worse if the Akalis go in for their so called *morchas*. Already the course of confrontation adopted by the Badal–Tohra Akali Dal has encouraged and strengthened extremism. If all Akali Dals get together and there is confrontation with the Centre, and with the Congress (I), and the power struggle intensifies, the sitnation will further deteriorate. The left parties—the two Communist parties—are consistently fighting for national integrity and Hindu Sikh amity and against separatism and terrorism, but by themselves they cannot tilt the balance and bring a positive turn in the politlcal situation. That is why the C.P.I. and the C.P.I. (M) have been campaigning for a joint political mass movement of all parties committed to Hindu-Sikh amity and national integrity. The aim is to isolate the 'Khalistani' terrorists. to rouse public opinion against them and to mobilise the masses for more active involvement in the struggle against them, It is also part of the struggle to educate the masses for in the long run, the solution has to come in the sphere of msss consciousuess and mass action.

The crucial, question just now is how to cunb and stop terrorism, the shootouts, killines and other forms of

volience. This is, no doubt, a problem of law and order but it cannot be isolated from its political side, even in the near future. The poisoned, communal atmosphere is a fertile soil for growth of extremism and communal-chauvinism. It provides added support for the terrorists and for fresh recruitment of misguided youth into the terrorist ranks. A mass politieal educative campaign would help improve the political atmosphere and weaken extremism. Along with a thorough screening of the police force, more firm steps to curb communal violence and terrorism in Punjab, more effective steps to completely seal the Indo-Pak border and guaranttee against political interference in favour of the terrorists with the law and order machinery are urgently called for.

The problem in Punjab, however, is basically political. It was generally agreed that the Punjab. Accord is an important part of political solution, but it is now being argued in some influential circles that the Punjab Accord has become irrelevent since the extremists do not demand Chandigarh or Punjabi-speaking areas in Haryana etc. One may ask : Was the Punjab Accord signed to satisfy the extremists ? Did they not oppose the Accord tooth and nail ? Was not Sant Harchand Singh Longowal assassinated for signing the Accord ? The answer is clear. The Rajiv-Longowal Accord was signed to remove legitimate grievances of those who are for communal amity and national unity, for those in the national mainstream. It was signed as a means of isolating separatism and terrorism. That is why the elections to the Punjab Assembly became a virtual referendum on the Accord and the extremists declared their boycott, which was a fiasco.

But one of the factors contributing to the aggravation of the situation now is non-implementation of the Accord. This has weakened the position of those standing by it and is strengthening the position of those who are against it. This is what has weakened Barnala's position and strengthened that of Badal's.

The Barnala Government did not take timely action to remove the obstructions to the digging of the S.Y.L. Canal.

The fact, that when it did take suitabie measures to remove the obstructions they were taken late, proves that all this could have been done earlier. But the Accord implementation got stuck up primarily over the transfer of Chandigarh. The way, the various Commissions functioned and were guided by the Union Home Ministry, was an additional factor for non-implementation of the Accord. This dithering did great harm and must end now. The Centre has to rise above narrow partisan considerations, as it did when it initiated the process that led to the Punjab Accord. So did the Akali leadership when Sant Harchand Singh Longowal and SurjitSingh Barnala risked their lives and came to an agreement with the Centre. Such statesmanship and bold initiative are again called for, so that the Accord is implemented and other related issues resolved in order to restore normalcy in the strife torn State, and give security of life and property to all living there. And also to the minorities living anywhere. The Congress (I) and the other national parties must ensure that their different state units do not take inconsistant positions in order to work up regional clauvinism. Interests of national integration must have precedence over political expediency.

The nation has to safeguard the country's unity and the secular, democratic political set up. (This will need a strong Centre and a real federal structure.)

This will require a consistent battle against all types of divisive forces of communalism, casteism and religious fundamentalism. These evil forces have to be fought at all levels of a genuinely secular polity, separating religion from the state and politics. An all-embracing code and law be evolved baning misuse of all religious places for storing arms, sheltering criminal or anti-social elements and propagation of hatred of other communities and secessionism.

It has often been said that the Punjab crisis is a national crisis. It has also to be realised that it has to be tackled at both levels. Moreover, Punjab's case is not an isolated one as if it is a diseased limb in an otherwise healthy body. The crisis is nation-wide, with its specific gravity and acute form in Punjab. Hence the need for special measures, alongwith

the remedies needed at national level and in all spheres—administrative, political, economic and ideological.

The tragedy and agony today out-shadows the glory of Punjab, but has not overwhelmed it. The glory is there in the peace and amity that still reigns in the villages ; in the undisturbed productive activities of its toilers in the fields and its contribution to the national grain pool ; in the firm determination of its secular forces, despite many setbacks ; in the wounded pride and self-confidence of "the silent majority", and in the supreme sacrifice of scores who have given their lives so that this glory may not be engulfed by the dark forces of separatism that are running amuck.

The blood of our heroes and innocent persons calls upon us to see that this blood is not shed in vain.

8. The Best Crop that Punjab Has Produced

GULZAR SINGH SANDHU

Langeri, a small village under Mahilpur police station in the district of Hoshiarpur, lies almost hidden behind clustered trees and wild growth of elephant grass. On September 25, 1986, Darshan Singh Canadian, a popular communist leader, who was born, bred and brought up there, was assassinated in the outskirts of the village. The place where he was killed is just one kilometre from the police station, still the police have not been able to trace the culprits.

Should we blame the police for their slackness or should we blame the trees under which Comrade Canadian fell to the assassin's bullets—the trees the shades of which provided as if a blanket round the assaillants. The same trees which Darshan Singh had befriended since his childhood.

Bent with grief, the people of the area convened a mammoth condolence meeting in Langeri to mourn Darshan Singh's death. At the spot where Comrade Canadian was killed a banner was put up carrying the words :

"Your blood will show us the way in darkness".

The spilled blood of the martyr had its reflection on the anguished faces of the people carrying Red flags : they were converging on the football ground of the local Government Middle School. There was determination in their march, faith in their hearts.

Tribune, (Punjabi daily), Chandigarh.

The football ground became a sea of Red flags. In the midst of these was placed a photograph of Darshan Singh over his ashes. With devotion, men, women and children, young and old, placed flowers and wreaths at the haloed spot. This continued the whole day. Near the platform the security forces stood all alert.

The Canadian family had not arranged any religious ceremony or rituals.

The platform was neat and clean. There was silence all around. The air was sombrous. Gloom and sorrow writ large on all the faces.

A free kitchen had been arranged for the people Dozens of women baked chapaties on big iron-plates. No caste discrimination. Scheduled Caste girls helped their high caste companions.

The mourners included people from the border areas, carrying guns, swords and sticks. Old age and ill—health did not deter any. Many women carried their babies with them. Some were straight from sickbeds. All were saddened. There were Sikhs and Hindus in all types of dresses.

Slogans like, "Long Live Revolution", "Darshan, we will Defend your Ideas with full Determination", "Neither Hindu Raj nor Khalistan, Long Live Hindustan", filled the air. Here was India—the real India—where caste or religion did not matter.

The meeting began with a poem by Roop Singh Inqlab, followed by speehes of Comrades Autar Singh Malhotra, Jagjit Singh Anand of the C.P.I. Bhagat Singh Bilga of the Desh Bhagat Memorial Committee, Comrades Gurcharan Singh Randhawa, Pandit Kishori Lal and Chanan Singh Dhoot of the CPI (M), Jathedar Harbans Singh Mahilpur (Akali), Kewal Krishan (Congress), S. Kabul Singh (former President of the S.G.P.C.), Satya Pal Dang, K.K. Vyas, Prof. Ajit (Langeri), Sardar Manjit Singh Sarpanch (Lally), and many more. The meeting concluded with the speech of Sardar Balwant Singh, the Finance Minister of Punjab.

This meeting, held on October 5, was significant because it had brought together the CPI, the CPI (M), the Akalis the

Congress, the Socialists and other parties in their determination to fight extremism. This very phenomenon was observed on the day of the cremation too when Sardar Buta Singh, the Union Home Minister, S S. Ray, the Governor of Punjab, and some Punjab Ministers, had joined the mourners.

The ideology of the Badal-Tohra group was roundly referred to and condemned, while the people wondered why these leaders who could attend the funeral rites of the extremists had not cared to attend the last rites of this great humanist.

A bit away from the stage and the audience, there were people who had met after a long time. They had in the early part of their lives joined the progressive movement but later drifted away, absorbed in their professions. They included doctors, lawyers, farmers and scientists. Among them one could see Naunihal Singh (of the Phagwara bomb case), Joginder Bahrla, (a popular singer and an IPTA worker), Dr. Sher Singh and his wife (Kunbhra Tohana), Madan Lal Didi, Amar Singh Niddar (one-time distributor of Progressive Literature in Mahilpur), Hardip Kaur (of the Sugar Cane Research Centre, Gurha), Surjan Zeervi of *Nawan Zamana* and his wife, Amrit, and Dr. Harsaran Singh Dhillon of Ikalgadda.

Poet Santokh Singh Dheer recited his poem with the same gusto as was there thirty-five years ago. He had beautifully captured the spirit of martyrdom of Darshan Singh Canadian who had walked in the footsteps of Christ, Gautam and the Sikh Gurus.

My visit to Langeri reminded me of the land which has played an important role in my life. I used to go to Mahilpur, six miles away from my village, Soni, via Mazara Dengarian, and Chandu. At first I used to go on foot, afterwards on a cycle I remembered the hilly torrent which I would cross before going to Mazara Dengarian. I had also to cross another flooded stream between Langeri and Mahilpur. The whole past came before my eyes.

Here Harbhajan Singh, who was the Headmaster of Guru Gobind Singh Khalsa High School had pledged to raise a college. Here were born Darshan Singh Canadian, Justice

A.S. Bains, Prof. Yashdeep Singh, Vice-Chancellor, S.S. Bal, former Registrar Sujan Singh, Principal Gurdip Singh Randhawa, Litterateurs Ajmer Singh Coventary, Ajaib Singh Kamal, Malkiat Sandhu and many more, intellectuals and artists. Though the school and the college were named 'Khalsa' and 'Guru Gobind Singh', Mahilpur has been a strong centre of communist movement which took birth with the Ghadar Party stalwarts, most of whom had emigrated to the U.S. from this area. At a young age of nineteen, Darshan Singh also went to Canada to earn his livelihood but returned as a communist. Like Dr. Bnag Singh, his comrade, he would go from village to village for meeting people on cycle. The same cycle he was riding when he fell to the assassin's bullets.

By announcing the opening of a stadium, a water supply system and agriclture reseach centre, Sardar Balwant Singh, Finance Minister, has only paid back the debt we owed Darshan Singh, the champion of humanity. The villagers, on their own, have named the road leading to Mahilpur the Darshan Singh Canadian Road. They have also decided to hold an annual fair on September 25 every year in his honour.

For several decades Darshan Singh had stood for progressive ideas. I fail to understand which ideology had the assassins tried to serve by mowing down the best crop that this land of the Ghadarites had produced.

9. A Great Revolutionary Fighter

VIMLA DANG

A photograph of Banso, wife of Comrade Darshan Singh Canadian, standing with her clenched fist besides the body of her husband and shouting slogans against terrorism drew the attention of several of our friends in Delhi on September 27. The English Daily in which it was printed was brought to the office of the National Federation of Indian Women and we from Punjab showed it proudly to everyone. Comrade Darshan Singh was assassinated on September 26, near his village Langeri in Hoshiarpur district by the Khalistani extremists.

I remember how just before the cremation Banso had mounted the van decorated with the Red flags on which the martyr's body had been placed and as it drove at the head of the funeral procession from Langeri to Mahilpur how she had stood in the front shouting vociferously, "Down with Extremism and Separatism", "Hindu-Sikh Ekta Zindabad", "Comrade Canadian Lal Salaam"...It required great courage for a woman in her situation to do that.

Looking at her determined face I remembered the sad and serene faces of Punam Sumit Singh, Mrs. Arjun Singh Mastana, Mrs. Romesh, Mrs. Baldev Singh Mann and of several others who had shown exemplary courage in similar tragic circumstances And I was reminded of the famous saying, ' Shaheed Di Patni Kade Vidhva Nahin Hundi", (A Martyr's wife is never widowed). She must face the future courageously.

Yes, Banso is a brave woman. All through the past long years she had stood with unflinching determination with her husband struggling for the fulfilment of his cherished goal. Just before the funeral march, she told me, "Shaheed Jal Singh of Ghadar Party was my grandfather". Banso's (Harbans Kaur) father, Comrade Jaswant Singh, was a leading communist who worked as a wholetimer for several years in Jandiala in district Jalandhar. Many comrades used to come to their house and this drew her to the communist movement.

Her marriage with Comrade Canadian was arranged with the help of Comrade Harkrishen Singh Surjeet, now CPM leader, and was solemnized in a simple manner with the exchange of garlands in front of friends and relations who blessed the newly married couple. Many of their very close relatives could not attend the marriage on account of the underground period.

Banso was totally illiterate then, but Comrade Darshan encouraged her to study so that she could read newspapers and party literature. Soon Banso became active and worked as a wholetimer in Ludhiana and Amritsar in the women's movement. Later, they shifted to Jalandhar. Banso took an active part in the betterment levy struggle, in the strike of the Phagwara textile mill workers and in several Kisan morchas.

It was in Jalandhar that their first daughter was born. Later another daughter and a son were born and Comrade Darshan Singh persuaded his wife to shift to their village in Langeri. Comrade Darshan Singh had great regard for his wife. He used to tell us, "She is the one who looks after the land and manages the entire household. She is the one who has reared up our children. But for her I could never have done active revolutionary work".

Comrade Darshan Singh was never feudal in his attitude towards women. He practised what he preached A dogged fighter for the rights of women, he firmly opposed the dowry system. Marriages of all his children were solemnized in a simple way with few friends and comrades attending them along with his own relatives. Though he was an MLA of long standing, no Ministers or Government officers were invited to

these functions. Comrade Darshan loved his daughters and never made any discrimination between the daughters and the sons. He had great regard for his daughter-in-law. I remember how when a couple was victimised and expelled from a college in his constituency for daring to have an inter-caste marriage (Jat and Harijan) Darshan took up their cause and got the couple reinstated.

Comrade Darshan Singh was an all-round person, well-versed in Marxism, History, Religion and Literature. We saw his library which contained some choicest books. I remember having seen beautiful paintings of Nandlal Bose, on the birth and life of the Buddha, in his house in Jalandhar which he had nicely got framed and kept in his room.

Comrade Darshan Singh was very ill during the last few years of his life. There were times when he could not move his fingers to write, but when he became a little better he became active. He was selected by the party to contest the last Assembly elections but lost by a very small margin. When communal killings started in Punjab, Comrade Darshan plunged into the campaign for communal harmony. He addressed scores of meetings and went right into the strongholds of the extremists in Amritsar and Moga. The meetings and rallies jointly organized by the CPI and the CPM at which he spoke were attended by hundreds and thousands of Hindus and especially the Sikhs. He wrote several articles and spoke powerfully with passion calling upon the people to rise up and defeat the conspiracy of Imperailism to provoke Hindu-Sikh riots and dismember our country.

He exposed the slogan of Khalistan and quoting profusely from Guru Granth Saheb and teachings of the Sikh Gurus explained to the people that the extremists' actions went against the tenets of Sikhism, which signified and preached love of humanity, brotherhood of mankind, equitable social opportunities for all men, service of humanity and practice of a moral code. Thousands listened to him spellbound in Patti and Tarn Taran, Moga and Nakodar, Ajnala and Chhima Bath and Rayya. The Khalistani extremists felt enraged and indignant at the widespread support and response he got at

these massive meetings against extremist ideology and for the policies of the Communist Party and they decided to put an end to his noble life.

On September 23, he addressed his last meeting in Rayya, in Amritsar district, and as he was returning he dropped at the village of his son's in-laws at Indhana. On his way back to Langeri, while he was driving home on his cycle three terrorists attacked him and shot him dead. As thousands marched to Langeri to attend his cremation and later the 'Shok Samagam', people pointed out the spot on the left side of the road where he fell to the assassin's bullets. We saw that a Red Flag had been planted on the nearby eucalyptus tree to mark the place and a banner flutterred on which was written, "Hanere Che Rah Dikhau Tere Lahu Di Lo." (The dark path ahead will be llghtened by the glow of your blood).

Darshan Singh Canadian was in Delhi just three days before he was assassinated. We received a touching letter from a common friend which said, "Friend of us all and dearest to most of us, he talked with great concern about the danger in which Amritsar comrades were living and working. He thought of us all but did not worry about his own security."

Several projects to help the poor to study, to offer medical aid to the needy, were started by him with the help of a Delhi charitable trust. Today people remember Comrade Darshan Singh with great respect for his supreme sacrifice. In his death the country has lost an ardent patriot and a great revolutionary fighter.

10. He Died so that India Lived One and United

JAGJEET SINGH ANAND

"The terrorist bullets pierced the heart of everybody's darling".

I got the sad news of Comrade Darshan Singh's killing at 4.00 p.m. on September 25 at Ajay Bhawan in New Delhi. Hardly two days had passed when, after frantically telephoning to get me, Darshan Singh left for Punjab, and it was just two hourse before that a comrade had handed me his letter which was to be sent to Karanjeet Singh at Moscow. Written on September 22, the letter contained photostat copies of his two articles in Punjabi—one published on Jully 29, titled, "Terrorists are not for freedom, but moving towards slavery", and the other, published on Augst 17, titled, 'Are terrorists Sikhs ? Their practices and the Gurus' ideals". Three lines were scribed for Karanjeet Singh, at the back of the letter : "Hope that you and your family are alright. Sending these two articles. Just for information".

Neither the writer nor the bearer of the letter knew that only a few days earlier Karanjeet had returned from Moscow to Delhi. Neither did I know that this letter was to be the last communication from Darshan Singh. This time, while in Delhi, Darshan Singh had met a number of comrades and told them that there was a grave danger to the life of Dang and other party leaders of Amritsar. He stressed the need for raising funds for their security and for this he had launched a

Punjab Kesrt (Hindi daily), Jalandhar.

campaign. But while collecting funds for warding off the danger to the life of his comrades, Darshan Singh himself remained unmindful to the risk to his own life, for he thought that since he had been ill for four years and had become again active only recently, his name might not be on the hit list of the terrorists and thus nobody would touch him.

Darshan Sinhg met me for the first time at Calcutta at the Second Party Congress. I was an ordinary delegate from Punjab ; he had come as an Indian delegate from Canada.

Darshan Singh was a great revolutionary. He started realising, after India became free, that the fruits of freedom were available only for a chosen few and a struggle was necessary to bring them within the reach of ordinary labourers. The Calcutta Party Congress accepted the request of our state party that Comrade Darshan Singh should stay on in India and take up the task of organising peasants and workers.

It was just after the Calcutta Congress that the Communist Party of India was forced to go underground and its leading functionaries were put behind bars. Camrade Darshan Singh had to spend first four yearss of his political life in underground activities. It was During this period that he organised the workers of Phagwara. When I came out of three years of imprisonment I learnt that the local party leadership had kept Darshan Singh in hiding at Phagwara and the police was badly after him. On the proposal of the then district party president, Comrade Ratan Singh, Darshan Singh was installed as the district party secretary, enabling him to have a wide field for political activity, particularly on the Kisan front. He organised the party work in such a way that people wondered at his organisational ability and capacity for hard work. Who can forget his contribution in building and strengthening the Communist Party in Jalandhar district.

In 1952, Darshan Singh contested the parliamentry elections against Sardar Baldev Singh. Apart from being a powerful speaker, he was a soft spoken and a sociable person. He intimately knew not only all the comrades in the district, but also their families. He could easily mix with the old and the young alike. It was this camaraderie that protected him

from the reach of the police. This was the reason that people in England donated at his behest liberally for party funds.

When the party split in 1963-64, Comrade Darshan Singh relinquished the post of the Jalandhar district party secretaryship to assume greater responsibilities. But his contacts with the district remained intact. That is why on resuming work after four years of illness, the first meetings he addressed were at Jandiala, Samraveen and Philaur. These series of meetings took him to those sensitive areas of Faridkot and Amritsar districts where the terrorists had posed a great challenge both on political and ideological levels, to the unity and integrity of the country. His enemies rested only after gunning him down.

Comrade Darshan Singh was not only an eloquent speaker, he was also a versatile writer who could write on any subject with confidence. His publications included, "The Indian Freedom" in English, and "The CIA Dagger" in Punjabi. He was a man of wide vision and assessed each and every problem from the common man's point of view and how it affected the country in its larger interests. During his last tour of Canada and the U.K., he warned the people and the authorities there against the deadly consequences of terrrorism and secessionism. On the basis of data collected he exposed the nexus between the terrorists and certain foreign powers. He cautioned his countrymen, through his articles on return that the real danger was neither Khalistan nor the Anandpur Sahib resolution ; it was the nefarious design of the enemy powers bent upon Balkanising our country. He established the very idea of Khalistan had been the creation of the henchmen of imperialism. He stressed the fact that those who raised this slogan were foreign agents and how the U.S.A. and Pakistan were encouraging them in their own interest.

On the basis of the teachings of the Gurus he showed how the terrorists instead of following the 'Saint Khalsa' were moving in the footsteps of the 'Devil Khalsa' and denouncing the basic principles of Sikhism—'Sarbat Khalsa,' for everybody's

good. This 'Burchhagardi'—hooliganism—he stressed, would never succeed in eroding the human values.

Everybody accepts the fact that the Punjab Communist Party is in the forefront in the fight against terrorism and secessionism. Though it is not among the two largest parties in the state, still it has through its struggles and fearlessness carved an enviable placc for itself in the region. The party had attained this position even before the tragic turn of events in Punjab and today it has a galaxy of martyrs. Darshan Singh Canadian is foremost amongst them. The highest tribute to Darshan Singh would be that we rededicate ourselves to India's unity and integrity with the banner in our hand that would bear the legend : "Neither Hindu Raj, nor Khalistan, Long Live Hindustan".

Appendix

Transliteration

1. Bagang Janam Dharat de jaye
Golian kolon kad ghabraye
Rahbar ohi jo sees kataye
Rahbar ohi jo sirad nibhaye

Apne lahu naal dharti sinje
Lahu range de phul khidaye
Rahbar ohi jo sach de khatir
Kood kapat naal nit takaraye

Translation

SON OF THE SOIL

Sons of the soil that gave birth to the Babbars,
When were they ever scared by the bullets ?
The guide is the one who lays down his life,
The guide is the one who sticks to the last,
With his own blood feeds the soil
Whence flowers blossom.
The guide is the one who for the sake of truth,
Engages daily in battle with falsehood and deceit.

Madan Lal Didi

Transliteration

Onanu bharam hai ke senya vich barood daag ke
Sach di abroo katal hondi hai,
Shabdan da moo band honda hai,
Sareer mitti ho janda hai.
Vird di ag bhasam hojandi hai.
Prantu eh unanda bharam hai.
Hadan vich mare wangare sach noo,
Itihaas di kuthali ro kundan bani haqeekat noo,
Te lokan di garj vich chali hook noo
Koi barood nai maar sakda,
Sirf sareer khatam honda hai,
Awaz khatam nai hondi hai.

Translation

THEIR ILLUSION

2. They entertain the illusion
That by firing gun powder into the chests
The voice of truth can be assassinated,
Words are forced to shut up,
The body is turned into a corpse,
The fire of opposition is extingnished,
But that of course is their illusion.
The truth that has penetratcd to the marrow,
The reality that was born in the crucible of history,
And the voice from the depths of the
Heart raised in unison with peoples' roar,
Cannot be silenced with gun powder.
Only the body ends up,
The voice is never silenced.

Tara Singh Sandhu

O' Aurangzeb !

Santokh Singh Dheer

O, Aurangzeb !
You play a guise,
Becoming sometimes a Muslim,
Sometimes a Sikh,
Sometimes a Hindu,
Sometimes a Christian.

You sometimes preach Muslim Hymns,
And sometimes Sikh Baptism,
And under the holy shade of *Quran*,
The holy leaves of *Guru Granth*,
You let loose
Orgies of massacre.

You flaunt *Quran* in one
And the blood-smeared
Sword in the other hand,
You cite Sikh Scriptures,
And also carry American weapons for
Fire, arson and homicide,
What great villain you are !
You guise of a Muslim,
A Sikh,
A Hindu,
A Christian.

O' Aurangzeb, listen :
Innocence murdered
Is never silenced ;
Seemingly silent at first,
Blood of innocents
Rises, boils and curdles
Like an angry lion
Awakened from sleep,
Like a storm,
Llke a tempest,
And makes mincemeat of
The villain, the monster
And the cheat.

Earlier too, O' Aurangzeb !
History battered you !
Now again, your monstrous head
Will be battered.

The original in Punjabi was recited by the poet at the gathering, at Preet Nagar in District Amritsar, held to pay homage to Gurmeet Singh, Editor, *Preet Lari*, who was assassinated by the terrorists.

Mann's letter to his new born daughter Soni

Barely 30 hours after the ghastly murder of Comrade Darshan Singh 'Canadian' in his village Langeri in Hoshiarpur district, Comrade Baldev Singh Mann, a young CP-ML leader was gunned down by the Khalistani terrorists on 26 September in his village Chhana Bagga in Ajnala Tehsil of Amritsar. A few days earlier Com. Avtar Singh, a young doctor, had been shot dead in village Chutala near Tarn Taran, aslo in Amritsar. He belonged to the CPI-M.

The Communists today are waging a heroic struggle against the forces of communalism, extremism and separatism in Punjab. The CPI has lost 16 of its members, including several prominent leaders, the CPI-M one and the CP-ML three.

Comrade Baldev Singh Mann was a popular young leader who raised his powerful voice against the forces of communalism and separatism and organised several meetings and rallies for Hindu-Sikh unity He was married to Paramjit Kaur who gave brith to a baby daughter on 18 September in Haldwani near Nainital in U.P. On 8 October, nearly 10,000 people gathered at Chhana Bagga village to pay homage to Com. Baldev Singh Mann.

As I mounted the dais I noticed the sad face of Paramjit Kaur, who was surrounded by scores of women. We also saw the 28 day old daughter of Baldev Singh Mann, a beatiful baby. Several women were carrying and fondling her in their arms during the rally. They called her Soni, the name given to her by Com. Mann.

Comrade Mann had written a letter to his baby girl. This was his last letter.

Vimla Dang

The following is the text of the letter :

"I welcome thee, my beloved daughter. The news of your birth was disclosed to me by your grandmother today, 18 September, 1986.

"She did not do so with a sense of joy and happiness and she would have otherwise done had a son been born. The atmosphere in the family also did not appear to be happy and cheerful at your birth because you happen to be a daughter. Your aunts remark remorsefully : 'Yes, a daughter has arrrived'.

"I know that my comrades and friends of my thinking will be happy. They will not only offer their warmest congratulations but also demand sweets and party ; but your grandmother was surprised when she saw gifts sent by your mother's family to celeberate the occasion. 'What is there to celebrate the birth of a daughter ?' she remarks.

"My dear child, I am not surprised at this reaction because I know well that a daughter is considered a burden in our society, a heavy social debt. I had heard and read a lot about this, but today I am experiencing it in my own family.

"Such a feudal attitude towards women has continued in our society since ages. The slavery and subordination of women is a product of fedual and capitalist systems. My daughter, your father is struggling to change the social system in which the birth of a daughter is considered a curse. Their is no doubt that many a people who profess to be progressive and revolutionary treated their daughters like most conservative and reactionary minded people. But I have pledged to live a life, do and act as I preach.

"My dear daughter, I am struggling to create a new social order in which the poor and the downtrodden will be liberated, fetters of slavery broken. I am struggling to change the lot of millions of starving childern, of women who are

forced to sell their honour for a living, of peasants who sweat and toil under the load of heavy debt. This is a sacred struggle for the liberation of the exploited people and your father is making his humble contribution to this struggle.

"My dear child, you are born at a time when the great land of Punjab is totally divided on communal lines. Some are being killed because they are clean shaven. Others have been burnt alive because they had long hair and beards. In the name of religion, humanity is being crushed and destroyed. In this land today blood of brothers is being spilled and communal carnage instigated as the miscreants and satans laugh and make merry.

"Dear daughter, your father is waging a fight against those dark and ugly forces who want to destroy all light, who are conspiring to eradicate the life-giving sun. Supreme sacrifice and martyrdom is called for in this struggle. I cannot say for certain that I will survive the wrath of these dark forces ; that I will not be killed. But whatever may happen, my child, you will always have the pride that your father fought against the dark forces of death and destruction.

"My dear daughter, perhaps I cannot give you all the benefits and facilities you want and fulfil all my responsibilities as a father, but the treasure of my cherished ideals will be your greatest possession.

"You are a flame from a lamp that emanates knowledge and light. Beware of the miscreants who are conspiring to drown humanity in blood. I have full faith and confidence that my people's struggle will be victorious. May you not see the hard times through which our people are passing. May we by our struggle and sacrifice sow the seeds for a new order where childern like you may breath freely.

"If we fail to win this struggle in my life time, then, my daughter, endeavour hard to join the ranks of our fighting people for truth and justice. I do not want you to be a Sikh, a Hindu or a Mussalman. Try first and foremost to be an INSAAN. Let not these divisions divide your human qualities, your human virtues.

"With these few words, my child, I address you as your father. I hope you will accept and implement what I say. Let these words become the basis, the foundation on which you will build and erect your young life".

A soldier in the struggle of my people,

Your dear father,
Baldev Singh Mann
18.9.1986

Translated from original in Punjabi. Reproduced from *Patriot* daily.

September 25, 1986
"Khalistani" bullets pierced through the heart of everybody's beloved Darshan Singh.
Darshan Singh 'Canadian' was not the first Communist who fell victim to the separatist-terrorist bullets during the course of struggle against imperialist-backed separatist agitation in Punjab. Communists have generally been the main targets of the terrorists in this agitation. As many as fifteen CPI activists, two Naxalites and one member of CPI(M) have also been 'liquidated' by the 'Khalistanis'. On the day following Darshan Singh's murder, a leader of the CPI(ML) (Chandrupulla Reddy Group) in Amritsar district, Baldev Singh Mann was also killed. Comrade Canadian was undoubtedly the tallest Communist leader to fall. His martyrdom takes us to the events which led communists to become special targets of terrorists' bullets.

This book commemorates Comrade Darshan Singh Canadian as an eminent soldier of the Communist Party of India, a powerful orator, a soft spoken and extremely socialable man, a fearless fighter and campaigner, a dedicated revolutionary, a versatile writer, and above all, a great human being. This book leads us to the events which bear the total responsibility of brutal assassinations of Comrade Canadian and other communists of Punjab by the "Khalistanis", who are out to disrupt the traditional Hindu-Sikh amity, and thus actively help the designs of those who plot to balkanise India. The communists held aloft their red banner, the banner of communal harmony, national integration, and above all, the freedom of India and her people, for they see in it the pre-condition for social emancipation.

The book is divided in two parts. The first part, entitled: "A Challenge to Separatist Ideology", contains six major articles and speeches by Darshan Singh, including his last famous speech at Patti on September 15, 1986, only ten days before his death. The second part contains articles and poems by eminent Communist leaders like Avtar Singh Malhotra, Jagjit Singh Anand, Gulzar Singh Sandhu, Vimla Dang, Madan Lal Didi, Tara Singh Sandhu and Santokh Singh Dheer. It also contains Baldev Singh Mann's last letter to his daughter.

The book has been edited by veteran Communist leader Satyapal Dang. It carries a long introduction by him, which examines the present complex situation of Punjab in a historical perspective.

Satyapal Dang, a veteran communist, is an outstanding working class leader of more than three decades standing. He was elected to the Punjab Legislative Assembly, and also was a minister in the United Front Ministry of Punjab.

His contributions, mostly on current political affairs, and on Punjab in particular, appear in varous journals and newspapers, which bear the imprint of Shri Dang's deep, penetrating and objective understanding.

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